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A COMMON-SENSE ARMY

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A COMMON-SENSE ARMY

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN ABSENT-MINDED WAR"

Cairnes, William Elliott

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PREFACE

THERE are few things more disheartening to those anxious to see the defences of this Empire put on a sound and business-like footing than the extraordinary ignorance and apathy of the vast majority of Englishmen on a subject so vital to their interests. Of the general public large numbers, though happily not so large as a year ago, are both ignorant and apathetic; of the remainder, many are apathetic, as many are ignorant. So little are the true needs of the Empire understood, so false are the views largely entertained as to the manner in which these islands and this Empire may be best defended, that we find men of intelligence and influence advocating considerable increases to our auxiliary forces, or endeavouring to arouse enthusiasm in favour of rifle clubs, by which the male population of these islands may be enabled to oppose a feeble and disorganised resistance to an invasion which can never come.

In spite of all that has been written on the subject, in spite of the lessons of history, so ably expounded

by writers of the ability of Captain Mahan, Sir G. S. Clarke, and Mr. Thursfield—to mention only a few whose names occur to me—we find both experienced soldiers and thoughtful civilians arguing that no scheme of Army Reform can be acceptable which does not provide for enlarging the militia and improving the efficiency of the volunteers, both forces which can only be utilised to meet an invasion on a large scale. It is idle to say that we have found the value of the auxiliary forces in this war. It is true that, the regular army having come to the end of its tether in a conflict with the least powerful of the foes who have threatened our security in recent years, we were only too glad to be able to draw men from both the branches of the auxiliary forces. This may be admitted, but this only proves that our army system was entirely unsuited to our requirements. It does not prove that we have acted wisely in maintaining for so many years forces of large numerical strength, which are not and never will be available, *en bloc*, for service outside the United Kingdom.

The only possibility of invasion lies in the chances of a sudden raid. This can only be defeated by action so swift and well timed as to be beyond the powers of achievement of either volunteers or militia. Such an attempt can only be frustrated by the concerted action of regular troops, working on a pre-arranged and rehearsed plan.

As for the possibilities of invasion on a large scale, I cannot do better than quote from a book which

ought to be studied by every Englishman, "The Navy and the Nation," by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George S. Clarke, K.C.M.G., F.R.S., and Mr. James R. Thursfield, M.A. On page 53 of that book we shall find the following:—"The command of the sea is, in fact, to England in time of war what the inviolability of its frontier is to a Continental Power. The loss of it is to all intents and purposes what invasion is to a Continental Power. The fear of actual invasion is a pure chimera so long as our fleets are able to protect us. No writer who has ever tried to conjure with it has been able to make his reasoning even plausible without assuming, to begin with, that our fleets have either been annihilated or wafted into space—'decoyed away' is the favourite expression, based upon a perverse misunderstanding of Nelson's pursuit of Villeneuve. On the other hand the destruction of our fleets would certainly render invasion possible, but would also render it superfluous. An enemy who knew how to apply the forces at his disposal scientifically and economically would never dream of invading England, if he could strike a vital blow at her power without risk, and with less cost to himself." I could find many other quotations equally *à propos* to my contention. Everyone anxious to study the question—and what question can be more important?—ought to read this book for himself.

After all, neither our militia nor our volunteers, as they stand at the present moment, and as they have

existed for the last thirty years and upwards, are fitted in any way to take the field. Their ranks crowded with immature lads or worn-out men, their officers ignorant of their work, very many of them physically unfit to take the field, the whole only partially trained, indifferently clothed, without organisation, without artillery, without cavalry, both militia and volunteers are, and have always been within the memory of living man, quite unfitted to take the field against European troops, such as would be found in an invading army.

The auxiliary forces serve no purpose but to enable successive Governments to throw dust in the eyes of John Bull. Ministers have been able to produce long rows of formidable-looking figures giving the imposing totals of our auxiliary forces. John Bull has taken these figures at their face value and has gone back to his counting-house contented. He has been the victim of a fraud too long. It is time that his eyes were opened.

Army Reform is in the air; it has been in the air for so long that there is every possibility of its being permitted to remain there. But if the nation is in earnest and insists, as it ought to insist, and will insist if it is wise, it will have to make up its mind to open its purse. An army, especially an army which has to be voluntarily recruited and to find large foreign garrisons, is an expensive luxury. But we have lately discovered that there is one thing more expensive than an army, and that is a war. The better your army, the less likelihood of war.

In the scheme which I disclose in the following pages I am at some disadvantage owing to being without any competitor. That is to say, I have not seen or heard of any other scheme in which the subject is treated in so much detail. Hence, the fact that the adoption of a plan founded on my propositions would involve an expenditure of some seven or eight millions a year beyond what we now pay will be regarded by many as a fatal defect. Before I can be expected to acquiesce in this decision I must be permitted to see another scheme which will give us an army of anything like the same strength for a less annual charge. Then, and then only, will I admit that my scheme has been placed out of court.

I have been able to devote but little space to the reorganisation of the War Office, though I think I have indicated pretty clearly the lines on which that would proceed. Roughly, the War Office, under my scheme, would cease to be the great administrative centre of the British army; it would merely be the seat of government, and would be charged solely with the duty of inspection and general supervision, on the military side, and financial control on the civil side. The actual work of administration would be carried out by the commanders of army corps, and by the officers whom I have styled District Officers.

With this introduction, already too long, I will commit myself and my scheme to the intelligence and the indulgence of my readers.

LONDON, *1st March*, 1901.

A COMMON-SENSE ARMY

CHAPTER I

OUR REQUIREMENTS

Some Points about Criticism — A Critic should suggest Remedies for the Abuses he Condemns — The Task before the British Army—Possible Campaigns in Store—The Possibilities of Invasion—Advantages Gained by the Command of the Sea—Probable Sufferings of England in a Prolonged War—The Navy purely a Defensive Force—What the British Army should be.

I MAY perhaps be excused if I commence this, my third book on the thorny subject of Army Reform, by a few words on the general lines on which I have tackled the question. In the first place I endeavoured, in "An Absent-Minded War," to arouse the people of these islands to the fact that our numerous disasters at the commencement of the South African

war were due far more to faulty organisation and stupid methods of instruction than to the difficulties inherent in the problem of how to defeat the Boers. It was not difficult to do this. Most of us have often laughed at the mediæval system in vogue in the Chinese army, an army taught to shoot with bows and arrows in this age of magazine rifles and quick-firing guns; but, after all, our own system was but little less antiquated, and our military mandarins have proved themselves to be quite as hopelessly behind the times as the self-sufficient rulers of China.

Consequently destructive criticism of their methods presented few difficulties. It was not hard to show how the army, for which the nation paid twenty millions a year, was entirely unequal to our requirements; how our officers had been denied the opportunities of making themselves practically acquainted with their profession, and how the voice of those soldiers holding high official positions, who saw whither we were drifting, was stifled by the civilian rulers of the army, who had no notion of what an army should be able to do, nor of

the perils to which the country would be exposed by our unpreparedness for war, but who were quite contented to trust to luck and to the probability that the inevitable exposure would not come in their time. All this was easily proved, but mere destructive criticism of this kind, though it may have its uses on occasions, is of little ultimate value unless the critic is prepared to indicate the manner in which these evils may be removed, and to expose the remedies he would recommend to the criticism to which he has subjected existing institutions.

In "The Army From Within" I have endeavoured to point out those reforms which are required to make the army an efficient instrument for war. I have, at considerable length, examined the mode of life and the training of the private soldier, pointing out the minor reforms which are required to improve recruiting, to make the soldier more self-reliant, and to stimulate his intelligence; and I have also gone into the subject of the pay, training, and promotion of officers, with a view to pointing out to the civilian reader

the chief defects in our existing system, and the manner in which these defects may be removed. In the preface to "The Army From Within" I was careful to point out that in that book I proposed to content myself with such minor reforms as could be put into force without any special legislation, reserving the larger questions of organisation and administration to another volume—namely, the book which I have now the honour to place before the public.

I imagine that most people will admit that the first duty of anyone attempting to devise a scheme for army reorganisation is to endeavour to form some idea of what our army may be required to do. This is absolutely the first and most important thing on which to have a clear understanding. We must remember that military strength is necessarily relative and not absolute; that an army, which may be amply strong enough for any possible task which might be imposed upon it at one moment, may very quickly find itself in a position of dangerous weakness, owing entirely to an increase in size or efficiency

of the armies of its possible enemies. Remembering this, we must, in the first place, decide which nations in the world may be regarded as our possible foes, and what measure of strength our army ought to have as compared with the military forces which they can place under arms. For our navy we have already set up a standard of this nature, and have decided that it is vital to our safety that our fleet should be superior to the combined navies of the two next strongest powers in the world, at the present moment the fleets of France and Russia. Is it not necessary to set up a similar standard of comparison by which we can, from time to time, gauge our military strength? I think so.

We must therefore consider where and under what circumstances we might be required to measure our strength in the field with either or both the above-mentioned Powers, so as to obtain *data* which will guide us in fixing the strength at which it is our duty to maintain our army. So little has the problem of what would happen, were the British Empire at

war with France and Russia, been studied in this country, apart from the purely naval aspect of such a struggle, that I am very doubtful if I shall be able to carry my reader with me in the line of argument which I am now about to enter upon. But this risk must be run, and the first point to which I would invite attention consists in a study of the possibilities of a military encounter on land between the opposing forces, should war unhappily break out between Great Britain on the one side and the Powers of France and Russia, either allied or singly, on the other.

Most people will, in the first instance, contend that such a war would inevitably, from the relative positions of the antagonists, be a naval war, and will further insist that the only possibilities of actual conflict between the armies of the combatants lie in the chance of Russia attempting the invasion of India, or of France endeavouring to invade these islands.

To take the latter hypothesis first, we know that we have even now force enough in Great Britain to repel anything of the

nature of a sudden raid from across the Channel, if we only take the steps necessary to organise the troops we already have; and as for an invasion on a great scale, such an undertaking could only be attempted after our navy had been destroyed, in which circumstances the British Empire would collapse without a single foreign soldier being placed upon our shores. There is, therefore, no need for increasing our army because of any risk of an invasion on a large scale.

Now as to the possible invasion of India by a Russian army. It is well known that such an undertaking has been for years one of the favourite studies of ambitious Russian officers. Many schemes of invasion have been prepared, most of them perfectly feasible—always on the understanding that the Russians can beat us in the field—and nothing is more certain than that such an operation would be attempted should war break out between ourselves and the Russians. A Russian writer has recently placed the minimum strength of the field force required to invade India at 145,000 men, moving by

several routes, and continually fed by reinforcements brought up by rail from Russia to a point as near as possible to the front. To oppose such an attempt we keep as a normal garrison in India somewhere about 74,000 British troops and a native army of about 220,000 men. But of this considerable army of native soldiers nearly 40,000 belong to Madras, and over 40,000 belong to Bengal. A large proportion of the troops from these Presidencies could not safely be placed in the field against good European troops, so, making allowance for these, we may take the total force, British and native, available for service against a Russian army of invasion as somewhere about 220,000 men of all arms.

It is hardly likely that Russia will commit herself to so serious an undertaking as the invasion of India without some endeavour to prepare the way by stirring up sedition among such of the natives of India as happened at the moment to be more or less disaffected and dissatisfied with our rule. Therefore, it would be necessary for us to leave garrisons of

British troops at important strategic centres throughout the continent of India, and we should also have to provide further considerable numbers of troops to protect our communications and to guard the different passes by which small hostile forces could otherwise turn the flank of our defences and enter India. The need of taking these precautions would leave us with an army of little more than 150,000 men, of whom but a small proportion would be British, to meet a Russian army of about equal strength, probably consisting largely of picked men. In spite of the great advantages which the invention of smokeless powder and other recent improvements in fire-arms have conferred upon the defence as compared with the attack, I hardly think that it would be possible to regard our victory as assured. One serious blunder—and, judging by recent experience, we can hardly expect an immunity from blunders—might cost us India. We would have to deal with an enemy who, unlike the Boers, would be prompt to take advantage of our

mistakes, who would not allow us to choose our own time to strike, and who would deny us the long rests for recuperation which we found so convenient in South Africa. Therefore the position in India could hardly be regarded with equanimity in the situation which I have been discussing. It would be necessary to dispatch heavy reinforcements from home, reinforcements totalling 100,000 men at the lowest computation, in the first instance, and in all probability a similar number within a few months. So that we see that, on the possibility of a war with Russia, we require a military organisation which will enable us to maintain our normal garrison in India and, of course, in the Colonies as well, which will supply the drafts to feed that garrison, and which will provide us with at least 200,000 additional troops of all arms in time of war, quite apart from any force which may be considered necessary for the defence of these islands. Will our present organisation give us these men? Most emphatically not.

So much for the strain to which our organisation would be subjected in the event of a war with Russia; let us now examine the situation which might conceivably arise in the event of a war with France.

At no point in the inhabited world do our frontiers run alongside the land frontiers of France in the same manner as they approach the land frontier of the Russian Empire. At certain places in China, in Siam and in Africa, British territory lies adjacent to the territory of France, but in these cases it is possible for us, being in possession of the superior fleet, to cut off all communication between France and her outlying provinces. Consequently, while we can always carry reinforcements and supplies to our distant territories, we can without much difficulty effectually prevent France from doing the same, and, owing to this, we would undoubtedly be able, within a comparatively short time after the outbreak of war, to compel the surrender of the detachments entrusted with the protection of the French colonies, cut off as they would be from

any possibility of succour from without. But it is hardly possible that the loss in this manner of her colonies would compel France to sue for peace. Far more stringent measures would be required. The ultimate fate of these colonies would, after all, depend on the final issue of the war, and, unless we were able to bring France to her knees, we might find ourselves compelled in the end to restore the territories which we had captured at a considerable outlay of blood and treasure. It is exceedingly improbable that our fleet, superior though it is to the navy of France, would be able to protect effectively the whole of our trade, most of which is carried in slow steamers, unable to make a better speed than some nine or ten knots per hour, steamers which are manned, at the present moment, by crews chiefly composed of foreigners.

We have been assured by many high authorities that there is no cause for anxiety as to the fate of our commerce in war, being bidden to draw encouragement from the manner in which British trade increased in the early years of the century

which has just ended, in spite of the fact that war risks led to the rates of insurance on ships and cargoes being raised as much as 12 per cent. But the writers who argue from the lessons of the past in this manner overlook one point of great importance, or rather two points, which vitally affect the subject under discussion.

In the first place, in the early years of the nineteenth century there was very little difference between the speed of the average merchant-ship and that of the average warship, whereas now-a-days the "commerce destroyer" can steam two knots to the one of the merchant vessel. I cannot but think that this will seriously affect the problem. Secondly, at the time I am speaking of, the profits made by our merchants were on a far more generous scale than is the case now-a-days. The loss of 12 per cent. on the cargo, though certainly disagreeable, was far from swallowing up all the profits of the venture. In fact, trade was so good, and our commercial supremacy was so assured, that it paid our merchants to carry on

their trade in spite of the high rates of insurance and the risk of losing an occasional ship and cargo owing to the depredations of French privateers. I hardly think that such would be the case to-day. Commercial rivalry is so keen, so many nations have entered the lists against us, that already, even in time of profound peace, the profits of many merchants are rapidly approaching the vanishing point, and there are very few branches of our trade which would not be at once killed by the imposition of an *ad valorem* duty of much less than 12 per cent.

Nor must it be forgotten that in those days great Britain was in a position to supply her population with food, grown within her own shores, while to-day she has to import across the seas by far the greater part of the corn and meat needed to support her people. Surely this feature is not without its effect upon the question.

As a consequence then of these changes in the conditions under which we live and carry on our trade, I believe that the out-

break of a war with France would be quickly followed by the most acute distress among the dense industrial population of the United Kingdom. Such of the swift liners as were not taken up by the Admiralty for service as auxiliary cruisers would be required to bring corn and beef to our ports, the import of the raw materials for our manufactures would come to an end, work would cease in all our mills and factories, with the exception of such as were employed in the manufacture of the material of war, and the swarming populations of our great towns would find themselves without money or the means to earn it at the very moment when the necessaries of life had enormously increased in cost. In fact trade would be at a standstill, and, from the highest to the lowest, everyone in England would feel the pinch. It may be admitted that the effects of war would be felt in France as well as in this country, but to nothing like the same extent. It would be possible for her to communicate freely with her neighbours across her land frontiers, frontiers which no British cruisers could patrol, and there can be

little doubt that she could endure the distress and inconvenience caused by the war for a very much longer time than we could.

In short, it is high time that we recognised the fact that our navy is purely a defensive force, except against a Power dependent, like ourselves, for her existence on her sea-borne trade, and that nothing short of military force applied on land will enable us to bring to a successful conclusion a war with any Continental Power. This lesson we may learn from two recent wars. It was not long before the navy of Japan proved its supremacy over that of China, but it was not till Japanese troops defeated the Chinese on Chinese soil that the war was brought to an end. Similarly in the war between the United States and Spain. In that campaign the overwhelming superiority of the American navy was soon made manifest, but here again the victory of American troops over Spanish troops on Spanish soil alone brought the war to a conclusion. Hence I am endeavouring to persuade my countrymen that it is necessary for us to have an army which shall be

equal to the task of attacking, with reasonable prospects of success, the great conscript armies maintained by the nations of Continental Europe. We must not for one instant forget that British troops have in the past fought and conquered, fighting against vastly superior numbers, on Continental soil; I cannot see why it should be so absurd to imagine that, capably led, intelligently trained, and well organised, they should not be able to do the same again. We must dismiss from our mind the feeling of awe with which we are only too ready to regard the enormous masses which the nations of Europe can put into the field. On the contrary, we must bear in mind that the very size of these great hosts will render them unwieldy and feeble, and that all the conditions of modern warfare, as we have learnt to our cost in South Africa, favour a comparatively small but mobile army, well trained for war, as compared with a slow moving and unmanageable host. Even in the days when battles were won by the actual shock of charging masses, a condition which one would imagine

would certainly favour the big battalions, we may read how small armies of well-trained men, handled by skilful leaders, have utterly overthrown great hosts with comparatively little damage to themselves.

Therefore it is my belief that we require in this country a military organisation which will enable us to put into the field an army of half a million of men within three months of the declaration of war. I have fixed upon the period of three months because it is probable that our fleet would require at least as long to mask or destroy the battle fleets of the enemy, a necessary preliminary to the transport of an invading army across the seas. Before bringing this chapter to a close there is one other point to which I must draw attention—namely, the great advantage which the command of the sea will confer upon us by enabling us to select our own place and time for invasion, and also to delude our foes by previous feints, thus compelling them to concentrate armies at points far distant from the spot actually selected for the landing.

Having now endeavoured to define our needs in this manner, I will proceed to tackle the far more difficult problem of how we are to get the army which I believe we require.

CHAPTER II

EXISTING DEFICIENCIES

Collapse of the existing Organisation—Bounties and other Expedients to get Men—No one Responsible for Recent Failures—False Position of the Commander-in-Chief—How this may be Remedied—The Commander-in-Chief to be Supreme in the Army.

HAVING now endeavoured to arrive at an idea of the nature of the task which circumstances might place on the shoulders of the British army, let us go on to see in what manner the existing organisation has broken down. In this we may find a clue to the system which will give us what we require.

It will be quite sufficient to sum up briefly the points in which the existing

organisation has proved defective. In the first place, the necessity for providing drafts for the battalions abroad has deprived the home battalions annually of a large proportion of their best men, with the result that we have been officially informed, on very high authority, that no home battalion was ever fit for service, and that the large numbers of very young soldiers and very junior non-commissioned officers in our ranks constituted a serious danger. We have seen for ourselves that on the outbreak of the South African war the majority of home battalions had to embark within a few days of receiving their reservists, and that in a very great number of instances these reservists quite swamped the battalions to which they were posted. We have also seen that about 100,000 of the regular troops left at home after the field army had left for the Cape were so young as to be quite unfit for service, though these men were reckoned on paper as soldiers fitted to take their place in the ranks. We have also seen that at a comparatively early stage in the campaign this country was so dangerously

denuded of troops, with the exception of the immature recruits already referred to, that the most absurdly extravagant bounties had to be offered to entice old soldiers back to the ranks, and we have further seen that our reserves of arms had been allowed to become so perilously low that many of these regiments, raised at such enormous cost, were for a long time left without weapons, and therefore useless, and we had, eventually, to have recourse to the humiliating expedient of going to Germany for the guns which we required.

Again, when the war took a course very different from that which our authorities anticipated, and large reinforcements were urgently required, it soon became apparent that these reinforcements could not be provided by the system which had been so extravagantly lauded by its inventors, and salvation had to be sought by appealing to the militia to volunteer for active service, and by calling for volunteers from the yeomanry, the volunteers, and even the civilian population of the country. To the colonies also we had to direct appeals for help, appeals which must have been

peculiarly distasteful to those who had received so coolly their early offers of troops. In short, the system to which our statesmen, deaf to the warnings which had been showered on them from all sides, so blindly pinned their faith, crumbled into ruins at the rough touch of war. It has utterly broken down; it is gone from us for ever; what are we going to put in its place?

We must not forget that the new system will be even more severely tested from its very start than was the system which has fallen into ruins, for we shall have for many years to provide a garrison of at least 30,000 men in South Africa, and not a single man can be taken from India nor from Egypt. It is already pretty clear that the Government have no intention of attempting any radical revolution of our military system, till such a revolution is inexorably enforced on them by circumstances, but that they have resolved to endeavour to patch up our present discredited organisation as well as they can, in the hope that this makeshift may enable them to scramble, in the muddling manner

to which they are so well accustomed, through the few years of office which may be before them. We have already received a proof of this in the recent announcement that the Government has decided to raise five additional native battalions to enable them to relieve the British troops now garrisoning the Straits Settlements, Ceylon, and some of our other coaling stations. This expedient will set free five British battalions, and may thus enable the authorities to stop a leak for a short time, but it will do nothing to make us any better prepared for war, nor will it do much towards the solution of the difficult problem before us.

I know that most people in this country have the utmost faith in the sagacity and good intentions of the present Commander-in-Chief, Earl Roberts, but the greatest sagacity and best intentions in the world will be of little avail when their possessor is practically powerless to initiate the smallest reform or to place the true state of affairs before his deluded fellow-countrymen. And this brings me to the second point in my scheme of army

reform, the first being the coming to a decision as to what our army may be required to do in case of war.

The second point consists in the absolute necessity for providing that some real responsibility shall be placed upon the shoulders of the Commander-in-Chief for the time being, and that he should in consequence be provided with means for making known his opinion on the state of our preparations for war. This point is of vital importance. I do not think that people fully realise that at present expert military opinion on the state of our defence is never available to the general public. That is to say, the men who find the money have no means of knowing whether they are getting value for their expenditure or not. We have recently had the very strongest proof that for the last ten years or so we have had nothing like value for our money, and have been at no time prepared, in a military sense, for war. Is the nation satisfied to let this sort of thing go on indefinitely?

The only opinion available to us has been that of the Secretary of State for

War, a civilian politician, as a rule absolutely ignorant of war, who, of course, with the best intentions, has invariably and consistently subordinated military to political and financial considerations, and has, in many instances, had no hesitation whatever in over-riding the advice and neglecting the warnings of the experienced soldier who happened at the time to be Commander-in-Chief. The argument in favour of the present system consists in a solemn enunciation of the doctrine that Parliamentary control over military expenditure must be preserved at any cost, and that nothing must be done to weaken the responsibility of the Secretary of State. I have never met with anyone who wished to do away with Parliamentary control over military expenditure, so that part of the argument is mere wind, signifying nothing, and as for the responsibility of the Secretary of State we have recently seen that the Secretary of State, when attacked as Lord Lansdowne was attacked —and very properly—the other day, has no hesitation in sheltering himself behind the collective responsibility of the Cabinet.

So this argument also falls to the ground. Really, from the extraordinary pains which are taken to limit the power of high military officials in this country, one would almost imagine that it was seriously believed that there was some danger of a military *coup d'état* or *pronunciamento*, politicians, as a rule, apparently refusing to believe that a soldier can be animated by the single-hearted desire to see his country safe against the possibility of foreign aggression. Where would our navy be now, where would the British Empire be now, if the care of the navy had been left to the politicians? Most of us can remember, though apparently some of us have forgotten, that only a few short months before the introduction of the Naval Defence Act, in which provision was made for the building of some seventy warships at a cost of many millions, Lord George Hamilton, the First Lord of the Admiralty, declared from his place in Parliament that our navy was amply strong enough and quite equal to any task which it might be required to perform. Take care that your army is not neglected in the future as it has been in

the past; if its welfare is left, as it is, entirely in the hands of the politicians, there will be a bitter awakening in store for England. The lessons of the black winter of 1899 are already forgotten. Two petty republics pricked the bladder of our military might; we have repaired the puncture and forgotten the incident; but the bladder is still a bladder; the next prick may be beyond our powers to repair.

How then can we assure ourselves that our army and navy are being maintained in an efficient condition and ready for emergencies? Simply enough. All that is necessary is that both the First Naval Lord of the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army should furnish annual certificates, signed by themselves, to be placed on the table of both Houses of Parliament along with the estimates, to the effect that the navy or army, as the case may be, is in good order, of a strength to be previously decided on, and that ample supplies of military stores and munitions of war are on hand. This would be the first step towards giving the Commander-in-Chief power and

responsibility; the second step would be to make him supreme in the army, and in reality the military commander of both the Adjutant and Quartermaster-Generals. At present the Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, and the Inspectors-General of Fortification and Ordnance, are co-ordinate officials, each supreme in their own departments, and each entitled to discuss matters with and to advise the Secretary of State. Surely we have had a sufficient object-lesson of the dangers to which the present system of divided responsibility and purely civilian control may lead us. We have seen the ill-effects of divesting the Commander-in-Chief of all responsibility, of allowing a civilian, ignorant of war, to control our military policy, and of allowing this civilian to shelter himself behind the responsibility of a Cabinet equally unfitted to control any military operations whatever.

Had our foes been more formidable than the petty republics which challenged us to war, our downfall and humiliation must have been complete. Nothing is

more certain; yet we are already prepared to permit a continuance of the present system, and have already forgotten our past humiliation and our narrow escape from entire defeat.

This then is the position to which we have now arrived. We have fixed the strength at which the army must be maintained, roughly, and we have stipulated for an annual certificate from the Commander-in-Chief stating that the army is ready for service in every respect, or otherwise, as the case may be. We have also decided that the Commander-in-Chief must be supreme in military matters, and that such officials as the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Inspector-General of Fortifications, etc., must be under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, and must communicate with the Secretary of State entirely through him. By this means we shall ensure both power and real responsibility to the Commander-in-Chief, and shall get rid of the muddling system which has proved so disastrous in the past.

CHAPTER III

RECRUITING PROBLEMS

Our Present Numerical Strength, Actual and Imaginary—No Reserves Available—Breakdown of the System—Three Ways of Obtaining Recruits—Compulsory Service—The Plan Recommended — Period of Colour and Reserve Service—The Different Classes of the Reserve—Their Liability to Service.

IN this chapter I propose to deal with the very important questions of numbers and recruiting, reserving for a later chapter the subject of the organisation of the men forming the army.

The normal establishment of the regular army, before the outbreak of the Boer war, averaged about 250,000 men with 30,000 horses, having nominally in reserve,

but actually on furlough from the first line, some 80,000 men in what is known as the first-class of the army reserve. This was the establishment, but it represented an ideal which was seldom reached, the army being, as a rule, nearly 25,000 men short of the authorised numbers. For instance, in 1898-99, with an establishment of 244,556, the actual numbers serving were only 221,487—a very considerable discrepancy. This force was distributed as follows :—At home 99,258, in Egypt and the colonies about 46,000, and in India over 74,000 men. These figures really give a misleading idea of the actual state of affairs. This is especially the case with the figures I have given showing the numbers of the troops at home, for it must not be forgotten that more than half of these men were, owing to their youth and physical unfitness, quite unable to bear the fatigues and privations inseparable from active service. Therefore, we can at once write off some 50,000 men as an asset which we could not possibly realise in time of need. Moreover, the bulk of the remainder were already mortgaged to

India or to the battalions on Colonial service, leaving only a very small number available as a nucleus of a field force for active service.

In fact, no use whatever could be made of our home army. We could not even send out a small expeditionary force of some 20,000 men without either calling out the reserves or stripping the majority of the battalions at home of all their trained men to fill the ranks of the regiments selected for service. And when the reserves were called up and a field force was thus prepared with their aid, we were left absolutely without any further reserve to fall back upon to repair the waste of campaigning, with the exception of the militia reserve, about 30,000 strong, whose withdrawal from their militia battalions would at once deprive these of their best men at the very time when they were most urgently required. In fact, as I hope my readers will admit, our army was not nearly strong enough for the great responsibilities resting upon its shoulders, and quickly broke down even when called upon to subdue two insignificant republics.

But we have just seen that the army, as it was, was considerably below its establishment, which means that it had not been found possible to obtain the recruits which were required to keep our ranks at the strength authorised by Parliament. Here indeed is the question most likely to give us trouble in the future. We have seen that it was not possible to obtain the recruits needed by an army too small for our requirements. How are we going to fill the ranks of the considerably larger force which we shall need in the future? There are three ways by which this may be done. In the first place by adopting some form of compulsory service; in the second place by so increasing the soldier's pay and ameliorating generally the conditions under which he lives as to offer attractions superior to the civilian labour market; and in the third place by substituting for immediate advantages some kind of future and prospective advantages which shall be equally effective.

Now, I do not for one instant disguise from myself that if I were to venture to point out that military salvation was only

to be found in conscription, nine out of ten readers would at once put aside this book, deciding once and for all that no such thing could possibly be tolerated in this country. Consequently I have another plan in reserve. But first of all I would like to say a word or two about conscription. For the army which we have at the present moment we require annually some 40,000 recruits, with a like number for the militia, and in spite of having recourse to such expedients as lowering the standard, etc., we are not able to get them. For the army which we shall need in the future, under the system I am about to sketch out, we shall want somewhere about 80,000 recruits every year, and none for the militia, and under present conditions there is not the least likelihood of our being able to obtain these numbers.

Suppose, then, we adopt conscription, and take every year 80,000 young men out of the number who annually reach the age of twenty years. It may, I think, be fairly estimated—so far as one

can gather from a study of the chief authorities on the subject—that 280,000 young men would be annually available for military service, of whom some 30,000 to 40,000 would be required for service abroad. The remainder of the recruits would be required to serve for a brief period at home, on the Continental system, being subsequently required to spend a certain number of years in the reserve. When we consider the rapid commercial progress made by Germany, in spite of the burden of a most rigorous conscription, I must confess to feeling somewhat dubious as to the many evils which the opponents of compulsory service insist must inevitably follow in its train. Personally, I have no doubt whatever that we shall eventually be compelled to adopt some form of compulsory service, but I also recognise that public opinion is hardly yet ripe for so drastic a change in our military system, so, as I have no wish to waste time tilting at windmills, I will for the present pass on to other methods of obtaining recruits.

We now come to the suggestion that

we should compete in the labour market. This would involve practically doubling the pay of the soldier, and would at once add some five millions to the estimates, without any addition to our strength, and though this might not be prohibitive at the present moment, yet we must not forget that as the condition of the working-man improves from year to year, as it certainly has improved in the past, and will probably improve in the future, we shall be from time to time compelled to revise and increase our scale of pay, very probably with an increasing army, till we at last find ourselves in a position in which no further increase is possible, when we shall have to end by having recourse to conscription after all. Therefore I think that to endeavour to compete in the labour market by the offer of immediate advantages to the soldier is unwise, for the reason that it is not a policy to which we shall be able to adhere consistently.

We come, then, to the third alternative, in which I think that it is possible that salvation may be found. I refer to the

offer of prospective instead of present advantages.

The probability that some inducement of this nature will improve recruiting has already been recognised by the authorities, who, however, have not had the courage of their convictions, but have contented themselves with vague promises that an endeavour will be made to find suitable employment as messengers and in similar capacities in Government offices for as many old soldiers as possible, and with appeals to civilian employers of labour to do the same. Though an attempt has thus been made to rely entirely upon voluntary effort to find employment for reservists and old soldiers, it is satisfactory to be able to state that civilian employers have behaved very well in the matter, probably recognising the fact that a man who was used to habits of order and obedience had certain strong recommendations in his favour to start with.

This was recently proved when the reserves were called out, the vast majority of men coming from good situations, many

of which were kept open for their return. But if the army be largely increased, as it will of necessity have to be, and the strength of the reserve is increased from about 80,000 to upwards of 400,000, voluntary efforts will no longer suffice, and it will be necessary to have recourse to legislation to ensure suitable employment at the standard rate of wages for all soldiers passing into the reserve with good characters.

Now, one feature of my scheme consists in the division of the army, including the reserves, into two main sections—section A, composed of men who enlist for eight years' colour service, four years' service in first-class reserve, passing thence into the second-class reserve, in which they will remain till they attain the age of forty-five, or become medically unfit; section B, composed of men who enlist for three years' colour service, nine years' reserve service in the first-class, ending by serving till forty-five, or physically unfit, in the second-class. Men enlisting in section B are not liable to foreign service, except in time of war.

The following table may make my meaning plainer :—

	Section A.	Section B.
Age at enlistment . .	Not less than 18	Not less than 18
Colour service . .	8 years	3 years
1st class reserve . .	4 years	9 years
2nd class reserve . .	till 45 or unfit	till 45 or unfit
If liable to serve abroad	Yes	only in case of war
Order in which mobilised	Sec. A before Sec. B, class for class.	

The men in the first-class reserve, section A, will be the first men recalled to serve in war; then men in first-class reserve, section B; then second-class reserve, section A; and finally, second-class reserve, section B.

From this it will be clear that those men who enrol themselves for eight years with the colours, and four in the first-class reserve, class A, will have a greater chance of being recalled to serve than the men enlisting for the shorter term only. And as these men, moreover, will have served abroad, and will, therefore, have a stronger claim on the country than those who have served only for the shorter term, it is,

above all, necessary that the provision for their future shall be ample and assured.

Without further labouring this point, I will go on to say that legislation should be taken in hand to compel all large employers of unskilled labour to give employment, at the standard rate of wages, to a certain percentage of men in each of the classes of the army reserve. For instance, suppose we consider the case of a brewery employing one hundred hands, 5 per cent. of these should be reservists in class A of the first class; 5 per cent. more should belong to the first-class reserve, class B; 10 per cent. should belong to the second-class reserve, class A; and another 10 per cent. to the second class, class B. Thus this brewery would employ in all thirty men belonging to the army reserve, the liability to service of fifteen of these men being exceedingly small. I have fixed the above percentages merely for the sake of argument; the precise figures could be fixed without much difficulty by the aid of actuaries so soon as the actual strength which the various classes of the reserve might be expected

to reach, had been carefully worked out. Government, as a large employer of labour, would come under the same rules as other employers, but an exception should be made in the case of firms and departments engaged in the manufacture of material of war, and it would obviously be unwise to do anything which might make them shorthanded at a time when they would probably be working under great pressure. Finally, to all men who had served in the army or navy an old-age pension should be given on their reaching the age of sixty years, the pension being somewhat greater for the men of class A, who had served abroad, than for those in class B. Should a system ever be introduced by which old-age pensions would be given to all men of the working classes on reaching an age when they can no longer work, the pension of the old soldier or sailor should be larger than that paid to the man who had never borne arms in defence of his country.

It may be said that my scheme would bear very hardly upon employers of labour, and it will certainly be pointed out that it

is not fair to tax only the employer, allowing the professional classes, for instance, to go free. I quite recognise the force of this argument, but I regard it as mainly sentimental and theoretical, as practically there would be no interference to trade and no hardship in compelling all such large employers of unskilled labour as dock companies, transport companies, railway companies, breweries, collieries, canal companies, etc., etc., to find work for a limited number of reservists. People must remember that a tax of some sort will have to be endured; it will either be a blood tax or a money tax; one or the other is inevitable. As for the argument that the sudden withdrawal in war time of all these men from their civil employment will seriously interfere with trade, those who urge this forget that wars cannot be fought without men, that in war men will have to come from somewhere, and that the disturbance will be less if everything has been previously calculated and provided for in advance. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that the reservists under my scheme will be men of superior average character and attainments

to those with whom the employer is now familiar. No man of drunken habits or bad character will be retained in army service; the parchment certificate of the reservist will come to be looked upon as the best character a man can have, and I anticipate that the majority of ex-soldiers will speedily raise themselves above the rank of the unskilled labourer.

The above, then, is in short my scheme for improving recruiting. It has this great advantage over any plan for increasing the soldier's pay so as to compete with the attractions of the labour market, that the rate of pay would not be liable to frequent revision, as the soldier's earnings after he had left the colours would automatically adjust themselves to those of the civilian population round him, and the only revision necessary would be that of the scale on which employers of labour would be required to give a preference to reservists.

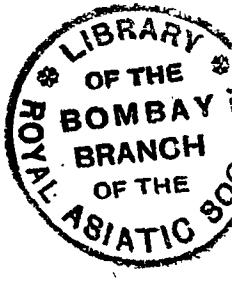
There are one or two points about the scheme which require a little further elucidation. In the first place, while retaining the minimum age of enlistment at eighteen, I would require every recruit to produce a

certificate of birth to prove his age, and I would provide for the instant discharge from the army of any soldier convicted of felony or of any disgraceful crime. Ordinary breaches of discipline and offences of a purely military nature would not necessitate a man's discharge, as such offences would not necessarily lessen his value in civil life, but men convicted of theft, habitual drunkards, etc., should be got rid of at once. If we compel the civilian employer of labour to employ reservists, we must do our best to provide him with men of good character; moreover, we shall not make the army more attractive to lads of good character by retaining in it men with no characters to lose. As to the provision that every recruit should prove his age on enlistment, I would insert this simply because there is at present an enormous waste through invaliding and desertion, chiefly due to the fact that we enlist large numbers of boys who are really little more than children and require them to do men's work. Few people are aware of the extent to which this is done, and there are no figures available to indicate exactly the

number thus wrongly enlisted; but we can form some idea of the manner in which the tax-payer is cheated, by being required to give a soldier's pay to a child, from the mere fact that in one year alone no less than 500 recruits had to be granted their discharges, being able to prove that they were under eighteen years of age. For the 500 who took this step, owing to being dissatisfied with military service, or to the action of their parents, there must have been many hundreds who soldiered on, either satisfied with their lot, or preferring life in barracks to starvation outside. Moreover, the necessity for producing a copy of certificate of birth on enlistment would put an immediate and effective stop to fraudulent enlistment, the curse of our army.

This, then, is my recruiting scheme. It has been drawn up in consequence of the fact, which it would be folly to deny, that the present method of obtaining recruits has broken down, and that it will be hopeless to endeavour otherwise to fill our ranks without having recourse to compulsion in some form or other. As I have already said, the country is hardly

prepared to adopt any form of conscription, or anything like compulsion. To induce men to enter the army, therefore, we must apply the principle at the other end and compel the country to provide for the future of those who voluntarily take upon themselves the burden of military service. It is possible that my scheme may fail, that even the certainty of good employment for the remainder of his life may be insufficient to induce the respectable lad to enlist. In that case there will be nothing for it but some form of conscription, but in the meanwhile my scheme is the lesser evil of the two, will inflict a less heavy tax upon the community at large, and will interfere very little, if at all, with our trades and manufactures.



CHAPTER IV

OUR INFANTRY

Existing Organisation of Our Infantry—Need for More Troops—Proposed Organisation—Mode of Providing Foreign Garrisons and Reliefs—A Force for Small Wars—Cost of Scheme Proposed—Force which it will Provide—The Volunteers and Militia—The Reserve of Officers—Some Possible Objections.

HAVING now endeavoured to place before my readers a scheme which will, I believe, provide us with the steady flow of recruits without which no scheme of army reform will be worth the paper on which it is written, I shall now proceed to discuss the manner in which the army might be re-organised.

We have now, not counting the King's Royal Rifle Corps or the Rifle Brigade,

the allotment of which corps I shall discuss hereafter, 150 battalions of infantry of the line, to which may be added ten battalions of Guards, shortly to be increased to twelve by the addition of two more battalions of the Irish Guards. Confining ourselves solely, in the first instance, to the normal distribution of the infantry of the line, including the rifle battalions, we find that we have had seventy-eight at home and seventy-six abroad, this apparent margin of battalions at home over battalions abroad being obtained by the rather absurd expedient of counting Malta as a home station, and of sending three battalions of Guards to garrison Gibraltar. But this was before the outbreak of war in South Africa. It is not possible as yet to say with any certainty at what strength we shall have in future to maintain the garrison of South Africa, where we have hitherto been satisfied to keep only six battalions, but, at a moderate computation, we shall have to keep a minimum of twenty-four battalions there for the next ten years, which will give us, counting Guards, Rifles and all, ninety-four battalions

on foreign service and only seventy-six at home to feed them with drafts, and even this state of things will only be obtained by placing all the Guards battalions on the roster for foreign service, and by continuing to count the troops at Malta as at home.

The system, then, has broken down. To enable us to keep the Guards off the foreign service roster, on which they should never have been placed, and to equalise the number of battalions at home and abroad, it will be necessary to raise no less than thirty battalions, which will be impossible in the present state of the recruiting market.

Should, however, the recruiting scheme which I have already advocated be adopted, I think that we shall have no difficulty in getting the men we want, but, even in that case, we shall remain in our old position of having no troops whatever at home available for small wars, without calling on the reserve, and will remain in the future, as in the past, without any means of expanding our peace establishment into a formidable army, having at its back large

reserves to fill up gaps in its ranks. In fact, our existing system is only a makeshift, and does not provide either the fighting troops, the reserves, or the organisation required for war by modern conditions.

Having, then, to provide foreign garrisons of about ninety-four battalions—assuming that South Africa will in the future require no less than twenty-four for a considerable time—and having only 150 line battalions, exclusive of Guards and Rifles, available for foreign service, and for feeding the ranks of the battalions abroad, in what way can we get over the difficulty which confronts us? It must be remembered that, as well as providing for our foreign garrisons, we require a system which will enable us to undertake small wars without disturbing the reserve, and which will also provide the machinery for training and passing into the reserve large numbers of men who will be immediately available in case of emergency. Before proceeding to supply my solution for this problem I must explain for the benefit of the civilian

reader that the 150 battalions to which I have just referred are furnished from sixty-seven regimental districts, each nominally of a strength of four companies, as compared with eight in each battalion, the majority of the districts having two battalions attached to them, a certain number, however, having four.

And now I come to the most revolutionary portion of my scheme. The first step will consist in a redistribution of the regimental districts, which will, in future, number one hundred instead of sixty-seven, each, however, supplying only two battalions, the strength of the depôts themselves being raised to eight companies, the depôts, in fact, becoming third, or sedentary battalions. I have fixed the number at one hundred on the assumption that South Africa will require twenty-four battalions, but if this estimate is considered exaggerated, the number of regimental districts can be proportionately reduced. However, assuming that we fix the number at one hundred for the sake of argument, let us see how the new system will work.

On the assumption that we have 94

battalions abroad and 106 at home, not counting the depôt battalions, the critic will first point out that no less than 94 of the home battalions will be practically "squeezed lemons," owing to their having to supply annual drafts to the foreign battalions. Thus, we shall be no nearer having a force ready for small wars than we had before, bar the twelve battalions, or six regiments, having no units abroad. These battalions, at any rate, will not be liable to the drain of furnishing drafts, and should consequently be able to produce at least three-quarters of their men over twenty years of age and fit for service; but in addition to them will be the eight rifle battalions which I would convert into mounted infantry, and nine battalions of Guards, a total of twenty-nine battalions, which could place in the field at least 600 men apiece over twenty years of age. This force ought to be fully equal to the duty liable to be required of them, showing as it would a total of over 4,000 trained mounted infantry, accustomed to work together, and upwards of 12,000 infantry of the line. With the addition of

the necessary cavalry and artillery this little army would be a very valuable reinforcement immediately available in any part of the world. Supposing, however, that it became necessary to maintain abroad a larger number than 94 battalions, and that the authorities considered that it was necessary to keep a minimum of twelve line battalions at home fit for service in the case of a sudden emergency, it would only then be necessary to select the battalions for this purpose and to place on the depôt battalions the duty of supplying the foreign drafts required. Thus the system would be exceedingly elastic, and with our growing Empire no system will suit us which is not elastic.

Under ordinary circumstances the home battalions will provide drafts for foreign service, while the depôt will merely pass three years' men through their ranks into class B of the first-class army reserve, those men returning from foreign service passing, on transfer to the reserve, into class A. But it must not be assumed that these depôt battalions will be simply twice as strong as the depôts which already

exist. On the contrary, they will be mobile battalions, though permanently stationed at the depôts, and will invariably take part in district and general manœuvres in their turn.

I hope that the above outline sketch of the system I would propose is clear to my readers. I will now go on to deal with some of the chief objections which I can foresee will be at once raised to its main provisions. First and foremost comes that of expense. It will be said that, whereas on my own showing we shall be able to rub along with an additional thirty battalions, or with forty-two if we think it desirable to provide for small wars, my scheme amounts to a proposal to raise no fewer than 150 new battalions, or, allowing that the depôts are now assumed to be four companies strong, 116 new battalions. The expense will, I shall be told, be prohibitory, and the difficulty of obtaining the recruits required will be extreme. As for the expense, so far as I can gather from a study of the cost of our existing forces as disclosed in the Army Estimates, it may at once be admitted that the scheme

I propose will cost close on seven millions in addition to the existing expenditure, but in return for that expenditure, which I admit is large, we shall at once obtain a system which will work smoothly and easily and which will provide us with a large army in the first line and trained reserves equal to any emergency. The nation will, in short, enjoy a feeling of absolute security, to which it has hitherto been a stranger, and the British Empire, as powerful on land as on the ocean, will be in a position to ensure the peace of the world and to pursue its way undisturbed by threats, conscious of its preparedness for any eventuality and master of its own destiny to an extent which it has never before dreamt of.

Let us see, then, what will be the strength of the infantry and mounted infantry of the British army under the system which I propose, after it has been in force for twelve years. Abroad we shall have 75,000 infantry, seasoned battalions, fit to go anywhere and do anything, at home we shall have 84,000 men enrolled in battalions, the large majority of which, owing

to their being liable to supply foreign drafts, will contain a proportion, about one quarter, of men below twenty years of age; in the depôt battalions we shall have 80,000 men, of whom two-thirds will be below twenty years of age, one-third being, to take the worst case possible, just eighteen, one-third nineteen, and one-third twenty. In addition we shall have 6,400 mounted infantry in the eight rifle battalions, one quarter of whom at the outside may be below twenty years of age, and 9,600 in the Guards, a proportion of whom, as at present, will be too young to go straight on to a hard campaign. So much for the men with the colours. Let us now see what we shall have in the reserve. In the first-class reserve, infantry, class A, we ought to have at least 70,000 men fit for service, making a liberal allowance for waste; in the Guards reserve, class A, about 20,000 men; in the same class of the mounted infantry reserve, about 16,000 men. In class B of the first-class reserve we shall have 150,000 men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty, all of whom have done three years' colour service: in

the second-class reserve, infantry, class A, we shall have 200,000 men, all of whom have put in eight years' colour service and four years in the first class of the reserve, all between the ages of thirty and forty-five; in the second-class reserve, class B, we shall have about 300,000 men, all of whom have served for three years with the colours and nine in the first-class reserve, of the same average age as the men in class A of the second-class reserve. In the Guards second-class reserve we ought to find about 40,000 men, and in the mounted infantry second-class reserve about 30,000. If we total these figures we shall get the enormous total of 255,000 men with the colours and 810,000 in the different classes of the reserve; in fact, in the case of a life and death struggle for existence we would be able to place a million trained men in infantry alone in the field.

So far I have merely indicated the way to a very considerable expenditure, though an expenditure which would well repay us in the end; I will now point out a way in which a considerable saving may be made.

My proposal is nothing less than the disbandment of the existing forces of militia and volunteers. This, I am aware, will be ill received by the great majority of those who have not made a careful study of what may be termed the principles of national defence. We have been told over and over again that it is only the volunteers who stand between us and conscription, and that it is on the volunteers and the militia that we rely for home defence. Now this idea is due to an entire misconception of our position. It is not the volunteer force, nor the militia, but the British navy which stands between us and conscription. The volunteers and militia will never be required to resist an invasion on British soil, for any invading army too large to be disposed of by the regular army, with the strength and organisation which I would propose to give it, would never set foot on the soil of England. As I have already pointed out, the only invasion reasonably possible would take the form of a raid, and it is extremely improbable that it would be feasible to employ a greater

force than some 100,000 men for such a purpose. With our regular forces in this country properly organised there ought to be no difficulty in disposing of such an enemy, therefore it is merely waste of money to maintain our existing militia and volunteer forces, who cannot be taken to serve out of the country—though we must not forget that both militia and volunteers have frequently volunteered for such service during the present war—and who cannot be made as efficient as the Continental troops whom they would be required to fight. As for the question of an invasion in force by France, or France and Russia combined, such an enterprise could never be attempted till our fleet had been destroyed, in which case, as I have already said, the British Empire would at once collapse, and it would not require the presence of a foreign army on our soil to compel our submission. No, the militia and the volunteers do not find a place in any well-considered scheme of national defence, and the yeomanry also should be disbanded, unless they can be induced to subject themselves to foreign

service in the time of national danger or great emergency.

But though I would abolish the yeomanry, militia, and volunteers, as at present constituted, I shall certainly require the services of very many of the gentlemen who now hold commissions in these forces to fill up the reserve of officers, in addition to the officers of the "sedentary" battalions, for a large reserve of officers will be required to officer the large masses of reserves whom we shall be able to place under arms in case of need. To all young gentlemen, physically fit, I would offer commissions in the reserve of officers, posting them to the reserve list of some territorial battalion, with the depôt battalion of which they would be required to serve for a fortnight or a month every year, preferably for the latter period, or would be posted to a reserve battalion, as will be explained later, for a week's training every year. On appointment they would, of course, be required to put in a longer period of training—say, two months—during which they would be put through their recruit drills and given an idea of

what an officer's duty consists. After six or eight years' service as subalterns, these officers should be granted the rank of captain, being required to qualify for promotion by passing a simple professional examination, and after a further fixed period of service they would be promoted to field rank. They would not be eligible for further promotion. These officers would only be liable for service on the calling out of the second-class reserve, and would, of course, receive pay and be subject to military law when serving in the same manner as officers of militia. In fact, they might well, like militia officers, be liable to military law all the year round.

Reserve officers would also be enrolled in the cavalry and artillery reserve in precisely the same way, though a longer course of recruit's drill might be necessary in these arms, and every encouragement should be given to reserve officers of all branches of the service to attend manœuvres, to qualify at the school of musketry, and to improve their military efficiency in every manner possible. On the militia,

yeomanry, and volunteers we now spend not much short of a million and a half. The pay and allowances of the reserve officers will cost something, but I think we shall not be far wrong in calculating that we shall save about a million annually by the abolition of these forces, making the net cost of the reformed army I propose not greater than six millions annually in addition to the present Army Estimates.

Another objection will certainly be raised to my proposal to create one hundred instead of sixty-seven regimental districts, as I shall be told that it will be impossible to find thirty-three more districts from which recruits can be obtained, and that the cost of enlarging the depôts already existing to accommodate eight companies instead of four, apart from the cost of building a number of new barracks, will be quite prohibitive. This is certainly a serious objection, but it may be answered, in the first place, by pointing out that a considerable sum is already about to be spent on building, and that my scheme would require little more than a redistribu-

tion and reallotment of the sums which will shortly have to be spent in any case; and secondly, that it is by no means necessary to break new ground in every instance for the new regimental districts. There are already several double depôts in existence. This system can easily be carried a little further, should the necessity arise, but I am so confident that the prospects of a future absolutely assured would attract far more than the recruits we require, that I believe it would be found easy enough to maintain regiments in districts where the supply of recruits has been hitherto altogether insignificant. It must be remembered that the abolition of the militia will very greatly aid recruiting, especially for the depôt battalions, which will, in fact, take to a great extent the place of the old county militia, with the great advantage of being liable for service anywhere in case of need, and of training large numbers of men available for further service in the reserve in case of emergency.

The above, then, are my proposals for the reorganisation of our infantry, and though the cost will be greater than that

of the present system, it will, I think, be admitted that the result will be infinitely better. For instance, had this system been in force when we found ourselves involved in hostilities in South Africa, it would have been a perfectly simple matter to have sent out as many men as were required, without drawing a single man from India, and without calling on a single man in either class A or B of the second-class reserve to serve out of the country. In fact, our army system would have given us upwards of 250,000 men of all arms for service in South Africa, and would have provided us with a force of half a million trained men at home, all regular troops, liable to go anywhere and not requiring the temptation of enormous bounties. For this we would have had to pay some twenty-six or twenty-seven millions a year instead of twenty millions, but we would have saved enormous sums in the conduct of the war. In fact, it is more than probable that there would have been no war at all if the Boers had known that we could, if necessary, place a million men in arms.

I will now enter upon the subject of the organisation of the battalions and the arrangements which I would propose to put into force for the supplying of drafts to the battalions abroad.

CHAPTER V

FEEDING THE ARMY ABROAD

Proposed Organisation of Infantry Units—The Company and the Battalion—Mode of Preparing and Sending Out Foreign Drafts — Periods of Service at Home and Abroad — Advantages of Scheme Proposed—How it would Prevent Waste in the Army.

OUR experiences in the Boer war have taught us, I think, that the battalion is no longer the best fighting unit for infantry, but that in future the most convenient tactical units for infantry will be companies for small affairs, and brigades for more important undertakings. But I would not on this account abolish the battalion organisation in the British army, associated as it is with splendid traditions,

and with all its convenience for administrative purposes. The battalion should still remain to carry on and renew the glorious traditions of the past, but the interior organisation of the battalion should be modified to suit modern requirements.

At present the battalion is divided into eight companies, two of which are commanded by majors, the remaining six by captains. I would divide the battalion into four companies, each about two hundred strong and commanded by a major, assisted by two captains and four subalterns. The appointment of second-in-command should be abolished, the senior major acting in the absence of the commanding officer. Needless to say, all majors should be mounted, as the commanders of companies are mounted in all the armies of the Continent. I would also abolish the post of regimental sergeant-major, placing a company sergeant-major as the chief non-commissioned officer in each company and giving him the rank of warrant officer. I have already explained in "The Army From Within" that the whole of the pay, clothing, and accounts

of the companies should be in the hands of a regimental paymaster with a small staff of clerks, and I have also pointed out that it is impossible to conduct the training of troops in a progressive and suitable manner unless they are relieved of the hundred and one duties, not of a military character, which now take up so much of the time of the soldier at home. Having, in the above-mentioned book, gone into this subject in great detail I do not propose to refer farther to it here, but I hope that my readers will understand that the introduction of the reforms there pointed out is absolutely necessary for the working of the system which I am now about to describe.

We will suppose, then, that we have one battalion of a regiment, which we may call, for the sake of clearness, the Rutlandshire regiment, abroad, the second battalion being quartered in England, and the third at the depôt. Each battalion consists of four companies, the men of the first two battalions being enrolled for eight years with the colours and four in the reserve, the men in the third battalion serving but

three years with the colours and nine in the reserve. Should any man in the third battalion wish to go in for the longer term of service there would be no difficulty in the way of his doing so; he would merely have to register his name for transfer, and would be transferred with the first draft leaving the depôt, for the depôt would still be the place to which all recruits would go on attestation, being supernumerary to the strength of the depôt battalion. Conversely, should any man who had enlisted for the longer period of service wish to alter his conditions of service, he would be permitted to do so on being able to find a man to exchange with him from the depôt battalion. In the case of the supply of recruits being greater than was required it might be possible to dispense even with this, but no hard-and-fast rule on this point could be laid down till the system had been working for some little time. Supposing, now, that the time has arrived for a draft to go out to the foreign battalion, and assuming that the companies in each battalion are lettered A, B, C and D, A company consisting entirely of men in the

fourth year of their service, it, with its officers and non-commissioned officers, will embark for foreign service, joining the sister battalion as a complete unit, relieving A company in the foreign battalion, which will, with its officers and non-commissioned officers, proceed to the regimental depôt, where the bulk of the men will be at once transferred to the first-class reserve, class A, the only exceptions being those who had been noted for promotion to non-commissioned rank, or who had been permitted to extend their service in order to serve on for pension. This privilege would only be extended to a limited number of men.

To these men and to their officers a reasonable amount of leave of absence would then be given, and they would rejoin at the depôt to take over all the recruits there awaiting transfer to the home battalion. These recruits would form the new A company of the home battalion. They would be trained under the eye of the officers who were to command them throughout their service, who would be entirely responsible for their instruction in every detail of their duties. On the

company reaching the required strength, with a margin over to allow for casualties before embarkation, it would take leave of the depôt and proceed to join the home battalion, with which it would remain till its turn came to embark for four years more service at a foreign station.

By this plan I would entirely avoid all shifting of battalions between stations abroad and at home; in fact, the foreign battalion, which would be always the first battalion of the regiment, would never come home, though it would be moved from place to place abroad in the usual way. But no officer or man in it would be compelled to stay longer than four years abroad or at home, though there would always be facilities for those who wished to stay longer abroad to prolong their service. For instance, should a man in the company due to embark for home wish to remain longer abroad, he would be permitted to exchange with a man in the next company wishing to go home, but a regulation should be made forbidding anyone from staying longer than eight years abroad at one time, or from returning

home with less than three years' foreign service, except on a medical certificate.

I cannot but think that the advantages of this system would be very great, and I have no hesitation in saying that the fighting capacity of the army would be largely increased by it. The men, from the commencement of their training, educated by the officers who would lead them in battle, would be instructed with far more thoroughness than at present, and would fight with greater confidence under the command of officers whom they knew and trusted than if placed under the orders of comparative strangers, as is so frequently the case in the present system. As for the officers themselves, there would be much greater inducement than at present for officers to interest themselves in the training of their men, as they would feel that their own lives and the success of their country, in time of war, and their own reputations and hopes of promotion in time of peace, would certainly depend on the manner in which they carried out their duties. Moreover, it would be far easier than under the present system for inspecting

and commanding officers to discover the capabilities and the strong and weak points of the regimental officers of the army. The state of efficiency of their commands would alone be impressive evidence as to their fitness and the manner in which they discharged their duties, and the same thing would apply to the non-commissioned officers, as no officer would retain in his company a non-commissioned officer who was too lazy or too stupid to second the efforts of his commander to instruct his men.

At present both officers and non-commissioned officers are supposed to be judged by the state of their commands, whether they be sections or companies, but as a matter of fact it would be both unfair and misleading to act upon this, in consequence of the manner in which both officers and men are shifted about, and also the manner in which the instruction of soldiers, in some of the most important duties of their profession, is entrusted to outsiders, who have nothing to do with the company. The equalising of home and foreign service among all ranks which

would take place under the scheme which I propose, would also be most beneficial to the army as a whole, though much hardship would certainly be caused to many under this scheme if strong measures are not taken to reduce officers' expenses and to increase in some respects their pay and allowances on the lines which I have suggested in "The Army From Within." At present large numbers of our officers, many of them our best and keenest soldiers, cannot afford to live at home on account of the excessive expenses and wretched pay. Unless this is remedied it will be hopeless to endeavour to level the army up to a high standard of efficiency. This must be one of the first tasks of a reforming War Minister.

I will now draw attention, for a moment, to another way in which the army will be benefited by the adoption of the scheme which I have just outlined. It must not be overlooked that under the present system no soldier is liable to foreign service till he has reached the age of twenty years, but, as a matter of fact,

very large numbers are sent to tropical climates at a much earlier age, for the simple reason that the age of the soldier is estimated by the age which he gave on enlistment, an age which is as often as not over-stated. As a consequence, many lads are shown in the battalion returns as twenty years of age, when, as a matter of fact, they are one or two years younger, and are quite unfitted to endure with impunity a tropical climate. One of the most serious and immediate consequences of this is an alarming waste, due to sickness and climatic causes, among our young soldiers abroad, while large numbers, who manage to put in their five or six years' foreign service, return to this country with impaired constitutions, owing chiefly to having been sent abroad at a too early age. Consequently, not only is the army abroad weakened in the first instance, but the reserve is weakened as well, nor must the probability that the race ultimately suffers from the number of prematurely debilitated men who come home, marry, and enter civil life, be altogether overlooked.

The scheme which I propose would certainly cost more in the first instance, but I am by no means sure that it would not be far cheaper in the end. In the first place the waste from invaliding would be very much lessened, if not almost done away with, as, owing to the recruit being obliged to produce a certificate of birth, no men under eighteen could enlist, and consequently, no man being sent abroad till in the fourth year of his service, all the foreign draft would be in their twenty-second year or older. It is also important to remember that as no man would be required to serve more than four years abroad, and probably not more than one year in any unhealthy station, the army reserve would be practically free from men with constitutions impaired by many years' residence in tropical climates. We have all been appalled by the tremendous waste due to sickness in the Boer war; have we ever considered how much of this has been due to the large number of reservists with impaired constitutions who have been serving in our ranks? No calculations as to the cost of the scheme which I propose

will be complete from which this item of gain is omitted.

I will now bring this long chapter to a close, and will proceed to explain how the system which I propose would be applicable to the other arms of the service.

CHAPTER VI

OUR CAVALRY

Existing Organisation of Our Cavalry—Need for Additional Regiments—Organisation Suggested—Mode of Arranging for Drafts for Regiments Abroad—A Territorial Connection for Cavalry—Establishments of Cavalry Regiments—The Cavalry Reserves.

I DO not intend in this chapter to touch upon the question of the training or armament of cavalry, with which I have dealt in "The Army From Within," nor to discuss at any length the question as to the future *rôle* of mounted troops in war. Most of my readers will have heard it argued with much force that the days of cavalry charges on the battlefield are gone, for ever, that the lance and sabre are obsolete

weapons, and that the cavalry soldier of the future will have to be trained to fight on foot with a rifle, using his horse solely for purposes of locomotion. I think it is very likely that there is a great deal to be said for this contention. It is not easy to see how cavalry can cross ground swept by the fire of magazine rifles, nor how they will be able to maintain on the field of battle those close formations which are necessary for a successful charge. But in the future, as in the past, the important duties of scouting ahead of the main army will certainly devolve on the cavalry, be their arms and tactics what you please; and as the correct execution of the duties of ascertaining the intentions and movements of the enemy while concealing the movements of their friends will require the most careful training of the individual horse-soldier, it is even more important in the cavalry than the infantry that the soldier should be brought up under the eye of his squadron officer, who must be held strictly and personally responsible for the efficiency of the men under his command.

In short, the squadron commander must be given a free hand in the training of his men, and must be judged inexorably by the result. Both in the cavalry and in the infantry we want to get rid of the feeling that an officer has no chance of advancement in his profession unless he manages to get away from his regiment. This is, as no one knowing the army will dream of denying, the prevalent feeling at the present day, and it has resulted in draining regiments of their keenest and most ambitious officers who, from the time they entered the service, have never ceased to struggle after employment on the staff. It is impossible to blame them for this, for have they not seen, time after time, staff officers suddenly appointed to regimental commands, or to the position of regimental second-in-command, over the heads of the officers who have borne for years the burden of regimental duty? In future, under the system which I am engaged in sketching out, there ought to be no difficulty in spotting the incompetent officer nor in noting the most efficient, as the state of their squadrons or companies will

be an infallible test; consequently there ought to be no longer any difficulty about pushing on the best officers to positions of greater importance and responsibility, nor should there be any hesitation about getting rid of those officers who prove incompetent. Even in this war, which has ruined so many high reputations, the regimental officer, educated under our present muddling system, has saved the situation over and over again. England owes a great debt to the regimental officer of the cavalry, the artillery, and the infantry of the line.

But I am digressing from my subject, the organisation of our cavalry for peace and war. We have at present twenty-eight regiments of cavalry, not counting the three Household regiments, of which there are sixteen at home, under normal circumstances, and twelve abroad, nine of these twelve being in India. It is therefore obvious that in the case of the cavalry we have not yet been confronted with the difficulty which has played havoc with our infantry organisation—namely, the impossibility of keeping up at home as many

units as we were compelled to maintain on foreign service. In fact, it will be evident that we could permanently station two more cavalry regiments abroad and yet keep at home a number sufficient to provide for their reliefs. So far so good, but it is hardly possible to disregard the fact that this happy state of things has now come to an end, at all events for a considerable time, as circumstances will assuredly compel us to keep at least two cavalry brigades, or six regiments, in South Africa for several years to come. We have hitherto had to keep two cavalry regiments in Natal, so, putting the number to be kept at the Cape in future at six, we shall have altogether sixteen regiments abroad and twelve at home, just reversing, in fact, the normal state of affairs before the war. As it will not be possible to keep regiments abroad for an indefinite period without arranging for their relief, and as cavalry regiments have no second battalions like infantry regiments, it appears that it will be necessary, in the first place, to raise not less than four new regiments of cavalry. In fact, it may be considered

advisable to raise more, but for the present we will assume that it will be sufficient to raise the total number of our cavalry regiments to thirty-two, of which sixteen will be always abroad and sixteen at home. So far no great difficulty has arisen, nor, with the inducements which I have described offered to recruits, are we likely to meet with any great difficulty.

But it is another matter when we come to the question of reliefs. I have explained that in the infantry the first battalions of all regiments will be permanently stationed abroad, being fed annually by companies from the second battalions at home, or by the third or depôt battalions in the case of the second battalion being kept temporarily on a higher establishment in order to be ready to take part in any small wars. In the infantry this system will work perfectly well, but it will be impossible to apply it to the cavalry. We could, of course, having sixteen regiments abroad and sixteen at home, link these in pairs for purposes of relief, squadrons from the home regiment going annually to the foreign regiment, in relief of the squadron

due to come home; this could, of course, be done, in which case the system would work smoothly enough, but I do not think it would be at all advisable to introduce a fundamental change of this nature into our cavalry organisation, for the reason that it would strike a deadly blow at *esprit de corps*. We must endeavour to nourish and not to destroy the regimental traditions and the regimental feeling which has done so much to stimulate our cavalry to the performance of glorious deeds in the past, and which, though under altered conditions of warfare, will be equally valuable in the future.

How, then, is the system of reliefs to be arranged? It is obvious that it will not do to retain the present system, by which men are kept from six to eight years abroad, for the reason that in that case cavalry service will compare unfavourably with that in the infantry, in which the foreign service will be limited to four years. As regards foreign service, it will be necessary to equalise the periods spent abroad in the different branches of the service, otherwise recruiting difficulties will

probably arise. Fortunately the difficulty of arranging for reliefs is not insuperable. Under the existing organisation cavalry regiments are divided into four squadrons, three active squadrons and one reserve squadron; on embarking for active service, the reserve squadron becomes the depôt, our cavalry taking only three squadrons into the field, as compared with the four squadrons taken by units of foreign cavalry. For purposes of interior economy these squadrons are subdivided into four troops, each commanded by a subaltern, the senior officer in each squadron being styled the squadron leader. The drafts required to fill the places of time-expired men in the regiments serving abroad are now sent out from the cavalry depôt at Canterbury, the system, tried for a short time, in the teeth of the vigorous objections of all cavalry officers of experience, of drawing upon home regiments for drafts, having proved a failure.

Now, to begin at the beginning, let us take the case of a cavalry regiment about to proceed abroad, supposing it to have been recruited on my system. To com-

thence with, I will assume that the present organisation of three squadrons and a reserve squadron has been replaced by an organisation giving four service squadrons in addition to the small reserve squadron, to which would belong the riding master, the quarter-master, a few rough riders, farriers, and clerks, and which would exist solely for the purpose of handling and breaking in young remounts and of caring for horses which have had to be removed from the stables of their squadrons on account of sickness. Now, following out my system of arranging the men in squadrons according to their service, we would have A squadron composed of men in their seventh and eighth year of service, B squadron of men in their fifth and sixth year, C squadron of men in their third and fourth year, and D squadron of men in their first and second year. Consequently the men in A squadron would be entitled to transfer to the reserve within, in some cases, a year, in others, a few months of their arrival abroad, while no men in B squadron would be entitled to be transferred for at

least two years after their arrival abroad. Under these circumstances, it would not be worth while to take A squadron abroad at all; consequently, as soon as orders had been issued to prepare the regiment for foreign service the men of this squadron would be at once transferred to the reserve, with the exception of the non-commissioned officers and those men who had been noted for promotion and had been consequently permitted to prolong their service. The regiment would then proceed abroad at a strength of three squadrons, with a reserve squadron as under the present organisation, and would retain this organisation during the whole of its foreign service. On the breaking up of A squadron, its officers and non-commissioned officers would at once proceed to Canterbury, would there take over the recruits for the regiment, and would at once commence to train them with a view to taking them abroad when the time came to relieve B squadron in the regiment. And here a difficulty will arise. As B squadron will be due for relief within two years, and as the men to

relieve them will have to be enlisted during those two years, it is obvious that such of them as enlist in the second year, at the age of eighteen, will not be of sufficient age for foreign service when the time comes. In fact, there will be a gap of at least a year, which will have to be bridged over somehow or other. How can this difficulty be got over? There are two expedients which will occur to everyone. In the first place, an arrangement might be made to retain, as can be done under the present system where men are serving abroad, those men entitled to transfer with the reserve for another year, or recruiting for regiments due to proceed abroad can be increased, so that the officers of A squadron, on dismissing their squadron and proceeding to Canterbury, will find practically a squadron of recruits waiting for them to take over. This would be the course which I would recommend, but it would only be practicable if recruiting was in a much healthier state than it is at present. However, I believe that the arrangements I have already described for the improvement of recruit-

ing would remove all difficulties of this nature, and there would, I think, be found to be no difficulty in raising the men required.

As the system got into working order, it is not likely that there would be, in any case, more than two cavalry regiments going abroad in any one year, so that it would not be necessary to create a large staff at Canterbury for the purpose of supervising the training of what I may call the extra recruits, whose squadron officers were not there to look after them. Once the system was started, it would work smoothly enough, each regiment being brought home when it had put in twelve years abroad. Let us now examine the constitution of a regiment returning home. It would consist of three squadrons. A squadron would contain men in their seventh and eighth year of service; B squadron men in their fifth and sixth year; C squadron men in their third and fourth year; and D squadron would be at Canterbury, and would contain men in their first and second year. D squadron would at once join the regiment, the time-

expired men in A squadron would be transferred to the reserve, their places being filled up by recruits, and the regiment would be brought on to the home establishment of four service squadrons and a reserve squadron.

In the above sketch of the cavalry organisation which I propose I have taken Canterbury as the cavalry depôt for all cavalry regiments both abroad and at home, but it would be far better, in my opinion, if some attempt were made to give cavalry a territorial connection, which we have found so useful in the infantry, and I would advise the establishment of regimental recruiting depôts for the cavalry at different centres throughout the country. If it be possible, as I hope it may be, to induce the yeomanry to accept the liability to foreign service in case of war, these depôts should, of course, be placed at the headquarters of the eighteen yeomanry brigades, two at each of the first fourteen brigades and one at each of the others, though it would perhaps be preferable to place two depôts at each of the first twelve brigades, one at each of the remaining six,

and two in Ireland. These depôts would simply collect recruits, forward them to their regiments, or to Canterbury if the regiment was abroad, and would also contain the clothing and arms which would be required for reservists in case of mobilisation. No large outlay on buildings would be required to carry out this part of the scheme.

I have suggested the placing of the cavalry depôts at the headquarters of the yeomanry brigades solely to gain a territorial connection, and not with any idea of affiliating cavalry and yeomanry, and for this reason: It has, I think, come to be recognised, and wisely, that the future training of the yeomanry, if we decide to retain such a force at all—which I would not advise for reasons I have already entered upon, unless they accept liability to foreign service—will more nearly resemble the training of mounted infantry than the training to which cavalry have hitherto been subjected. Should, however, the theory be accepted that the days of cavalry as cavalry are passed, and that all mounted troops will in future have to

adopt mounted infantry tactics, it will be possible to affiliate the cavalry and yeomanry, thus obtaining a second line which will be maintained cheaply, and which will allow of the rapid expansion of our mounted forces on mobilisation.

Let us now turn to the question of a cavalry reserve. In the organisation of the cavalry reserve I would suggest several minor points in which it would be advisable to introduce modifications of the system which I have recommended for the infantry. It will be remembered that I proposed that those infantry soldiers who enlist for eight years with the colours and four in the reserve should pass, in the first place, into class A of the first-class reserve, the men only putting in three years with the colours being passed into class B till the expiration of their first twelve years of service. After this the eight years' men pass into class A of the second-class reserve, and the three years' men into class B of the same, remaining in these classes till they have attained the age of forty-five years or been pronounced physically unfit. With the cavalry, all of whom would be required to

enlist for eight years' service in the active army, a different scheme would be required. Cavalry soldiers on passing into the reserve would fall into one of two categories; they would either have served abroad or have put in the whole of their colour service at home. The latter I would place in class A of the first-class reserve till the expiration of their twelve years' service, passing then into class A of the second-class reserve till they reach the age of forty-five or become medically unfit, those men who have served abroad being transferred to class B in both sections of the reserve, thus reducing their liability to service as some recompense for having been compelled to serve abroad.

But there is another point which must not be overlooked. Are cavalry reservists who have turned forty years of age likely to be of much use for mounted work? If cavalry are to retain their present *rôle* in warfare, I think not; if, however, cavalry are to be assimilated to mounted infantry in the future, I do not see any reason why men should not continue to do useful work as mounted infantry till they are forty-five.

We have seen for ourselves that large numbers of the Boers proved very formidable as mounted infantry long after they had attained fifty years of age, and I can see no good reason why our men, if properly trained, should not be equally effective up to forty-five. The exact details of the organisation of the cavalry reserve cannot then be definitely settled till a decision has been come to as to the future tactics of cavalry, but, assuming that no considerable alterations will be made, I would suggest that, on reaching forty years of age, cavalry reservists should pass into a third-class reserve, in which they would spend five years, from which they would be recalled in time of a general mobilisation to serve as drivers to regimental transport, and for instructional and such other mounted duties as may be within their powers.

Therefore the cavalry reservist will only remain in the cavalry reserve, assuming him to have enlisted at the age of eighteen, for fourteen years, the first four years in the first-class reserve, and the second ten years in the second-class reserve.

Before examining the subject of the

strength of the cavalry reserve available under the scheme I have suggested, it will be necessary for a moment to consider the question of establishments. At present, in our service, a cavalry regiment may be on any one of four establishments, it may be on the Indian establishment, on the Colonial establishment, or, if at home, either on the higher or lower establishment. These variations in establishment I would abolish, substituting merely the foreign establishment of three squadrons and a reserve squadron, and the home establishment of four squadrons and a reserve squadron, the strength of the squadron being kept uniform throughout. It may at first sight be regarded as strange that I would keep regiments serving at home at a greater strength than those serving abroad, but this difference would be purely apparent, as it must not be forgotten that the regiments abroad would each have one squadron at home consisting of men in the second and third year of their service, and in addition the rudiments of a squadron consisting of recruits in the first year of their service. Similarly

the regiment at home would always have one squadron of young soldiers, who would not be taken on service, and a number of recruits awaiting absorption into the senior squadron on its transferring its eight years' men to the reserve. Therefore the war strength of cavalry regiments both at home and abroad would be identical, and in an arm in which it takes so long to train a soldier and which has such immensely important duties to perform at the outbreak of a war, it is not wise to rely on filling up the ranks with a large number of reservists, probably somewhat rusty after spending some years in civil life.

There is another point to which I must now draw attention. Every squadron coming home from abroad will consist of men coming under two different headings—men of eight years' service, and men of seven years' service. Under my scheme the latter would be transferred to the reserve in the same manner as the others, unless selected for promotion and consequent prolonga-

tion of service, thus affording a set-off to the extra recruits, which, as I have pointed out, would have to be enrolled for regiments serving abroad. These men thus transferred to the reserve one year before their time would also constitute a gain to the reserve, thus somewhat increasing its strength. The strength of the reserve would be further increased by permission being given annually to a limited number of men, belonging to regiments at home, to be transferred to the reserve on proving to the satisfaction of their commanding officer that they were going direct to good situations, a permission which would be given with much greater freedom in regiments just returned from abroad than in regiments which were approaching their turn for foreign service.

Taking, then, the strength of a cavalry regiment at that of a regiment on what is now known as the higher establishment, *plus* one service squadron and, say, half a squadron of recruits, we shall obtain a total of about 870 for

the strength of the regiment. A little calculation will show us that, with thirty-two regiments, and allowing for wastage on a liberal scale, we shall be able to reckon on having about 25,000 cavalry actually serving, instead of some 19,000 (the increase being, in any case, required by the situation in South Africa), with some 12,000 men in the first-class reserve, 31,000 in the second-class, and 12,000 more in the third-class—namely between the ages of forty and forty-five. This reserve, coupled with an extension on a suitable scale of the existing method of registering horses for army purposes, will place at our disposal a mounted force of ample strength. The cost will certainly be greater than that of the present system, but it will be very little greater than that of the cavalry force which the present system will have to give us to meet South African requirements. In fact, I am considerably hampered in propounding my scheme for reform by the fact that comparisons of cost can only be made with that of a system which has proved to be entirely

unequal to our requirements. Were it possible to institute a comparison between my scheme and any other which would give us the army we need, I think that the difference would be found to be in my favour.

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CHAPTER VII

OUR ARTILLERY

Artillery Reorganisation — Points awaiting Settlement — No Definite Scheme yet Possible—Defects of Existing Organisation — Method in which they could be Remedied — Artillery for Home Defence—An Opening for Volunteers.

In this chapter it is my intention to discuss briefly the question of the reorganisation of our artillery. Here again, as in the cavalry, we have a highly technical service, in which so great advantages are gained by the possession of a *personnel* trained as scientifically and elaborately as possible that it is most advisable to insist upon a long term of colour service. Therefore I believe that we shall be compelled to

continue the present plan of enlisting our artillery for eight years' service with the battery and four in the first-class reserve, passing thence, as in the other arms, under my scheme, into the second-class reserve. So far as the batteries on the home establishment are concerned, there will be no difficulty in working the system; difficulties will only begin to arise when we begin to consider the question of foreign reliefs.

Let us first see how these are carried out under the system now in existence. The number of batteries both of horse and field artillery have lately been considerably increased, as it was discovered soon after the commencement of the South African war that we had not nearly as many guns as we needed in proportion to the large number of troops of the other arms which we were obliged to place in the field. Consequently we see that the number of horse artillery batteries has been increased from twenty-one to twenty-eight, and the number of field batteries from 103 to 148 In normal times eleven horse batteries are stationed in India and ten at home, time-expired men in the batteries abroad being

relieved from the depôt at Woolwich, units being relieved in turn by batteries from home, the same system being followed in the field artillery, of which there used to be fifty-eight batteries at home, only fourteen of which, however, were maintained on the higher establishment, forty-two in India, and three in South Africa. It is probable that at least four horse batteries and from nine to twelve field batteries will have to be kept in South Africa for several years to come, thus throwing an increased strain on the depôts at Woolwich which have to provide the drafts required to relieve those men who are entitled to be transferred to the reserve. At the present time artillery tactics are in a state of transition, or, as it would perhaps be more correct to say, are the subject of keen argument among artillery experts, who are roughly divided into two schools of thought, one body affirming vigorously that our South African experiences have shown us that we have been working entirely on wrong lines, and that the single gun will be the tactical unit of the future, while their opponents are equally

positive in asserting that the South African war has taught us nothing of the kind, that it would be most unwise to attach too much importance to experience gained under conditions which could never be repeated in any European war, and that it will be more than ever necessary in the future to provide for the concentration of fire by masses of guns, and that consequently the brigade division, or group of three batteries, will continue to be the tactical unit of the arm.

Until this question is settled definitely one way or the other, it is of little use to discuss seriously the question of artillery reorganisation, as, should the single-gun theory gain the day, the batteries may be left very much as they are at present, while, should their opponents be believed in preference, it will be better to adopt the brigade division for administrative as well as for tactical purposes. The batteries which will have to work together in the field ought to be trained together in time of peace, and, if trained together, should presumably be quartered together, in which case their amalgamation into one

administrative unit would be both cheaper and more effective that the existing battery organisation. Moreover, the question of foreign reliefs would become greatly simplified, as it would then be possible to adopt the same system as I have already recommended for the infantry and cavalry, and to send out complete the whole *personnel* of a battery to take over the guns and horses from a battery of time-expired men. In this way, as in the other arms, officers would conduct the entire training of their men from start to finish, and would be judged on the results, a plan which, as I have already argued, could not fail to be productive of benefit to both officers and men.

The question of armament is also in a transition stage. We are to adopt a quick-firing field gun, in obedience to the lead given us by the great military nations of the Continent, and it has not yet been decided whether in this case we are to adhere to the old standard that five guns are necessary to every thousand bayonets, or whether a less number, in consequence of the increased power of rapidity of fire,

will be sufficient. For myself, I would imagine that the difficulties of keeping up the ammunition supply of, say, 120 quick-firing field guns in an army corps would be almost insuperable, and that the heavy ammunition columns which this number of quick-firing guns would render necessary would lessen the mobility of the force to which they belonged to a degree which would more than outweigh the increased fire effect of so great a volume of artillery.

In spite of all temptations to the contrary, we must ever keep before us the vital importance of retaining the mobility of our armies. Superior mobility in the future will win more campaigns than the power of concentrating a tremendous fire from a defensive position. Nor have we yet come to the decision whether we are to adopt a heavy gun for field service. Such guns have been used with the best results in the clear atmosphere of South Africa, where it was possible to take the utmost advantage of their immense range, but there has as yet been no authoritative decision as to our future armament in this

respect, for it must not be forgotten that, though these guns are most valuable on occasion, yet that they cannot be quickly moved from place to place, may delay columns by the impossibility of moving them across bridges only suited to ordinary traffic, and have the further disadvantage of complicating the question of ammunition supply and of using ammunition which is both bulky and very heavy. Till these matters have all been thrashed out and finally settled, my readers can see that it is of little use to enter upon the subject of artillery reorganisation, from which I will therefore pass, after touching briefly upon one point which requires attention.

There are grave defects in the existing organisation of the Royal Artillery which ought to be remedied at once, especially in view of the recent considerable additions to the strength of the regiment. For the whole of the Royal Artillery consists to all intents and purposes of one regiment, though an attempt has lately been made to separate the garrison from the horse and field artillery. This one enormous regiment is commanded from the War

Office, and has its depôt at Woolwich, a state of things which leads to a highly centralised system, an infinity of correspondence on the most trivial matters, great expense, and intolerable delays. I am well aware that all the conservative instincts of this splendid regiment are opposed to change, but in spite of the opposition which any proposals for reform are certain to meet with from this source, I trust that no time will be lost in devising a handier and more workable organisation. Batteries might be grouped into regiments consisting of two brigade divisions, one to serve at home and one abroad, relieving drafts being arranged as I have shown they might be arranged in the infantry of the line, officers being on separate lists for promotion within each group. One advantage of the adoption of this plan would be that, there being always more batteries at home than abroad, those batteries at home could be kept fit for service in case of any small war without interfering with the foreign drafts and without necessitating any call on the reserve. However, half-a-dozen different plans could be devised for

breaking up the present unwieldy organisation, every day becoming more unwieldy as the regiment increases in strength, and I hope that common sense will be allowed to have a little to say to this branch of the army as well as to the others.

I now come to the question of artillery for use as guns of position in a defensive campaign in Great Britain. I have already given my reasons for asserting that the only form of invasion which we have to seriously consider is of the nature of a sudden raid, either at the commencement of a war with a European Power, or in consequence of the temporary absence of our navy affording a fleeting opportunity for such an enterprise. The enemy who launch an attack of this nature against us will probably recognise that, even if successful in obtaining their objective, the invading army will inevitably be ultimately captured, and, conscious of their inferiority at sea, will make no attempt to assure the over-sea communications of the expeditionary force. The raid will be made with the object of striking a paralysing blow at London, the heart of the Empire, and of

thus throwing the whole of our executive into confusion, disorganising all our plans, and, possibly, at once bringing the war to a favourable termination. In any case, the moral effect of a successful invasion of this nature would be tremendous, and would well repay the risk involved. The loss of the whole of the invading army, a force which could hardly exceed 100,000 men, would be a trifle as compared with the enormous advantages to be reaped by success; consequently, we have to be prepared to meet such an attempt, which would very probably coincide with the declaration of war by a Continental Power.

London, the capital of the Empire, would almost certainly be the objective of a raid of this nature, which I propose to further discuss in my chapter on mobilisation. Here I wish only to point out that guns of position will necessarily play an important part in defeating such an attempt, and that there is no reason why we should not retain the volunteer artillery for the service of these weapons. In fact, it is as garrison artillery only that either militia or volunteers will find any place in

my scheme for home defence. The garrison artillery will be the only portion of our forces which cannot be required to serve abroad. It will, of course, be necessary to provide gunners to man the fortifications of our coaling stations and colonial ports, etc., but in very many cases these gunners can be raised locally from local volunteer corps, and where that is not possible a comparatively small force of regular garrison artillery will suffice for their needs. But the whole of our defensive works at home should be manned entirely by volunteer or militia artillery. Personally, I would prefer volunteers to militia for this service, and would invariably provide the artillery garrison of each work from volunteers recruited in the locality.

The military authorities have recommended the preparation of certain defensive positions covering London; these positions should be completed without delay, the necessary guns provided, and volunteer corps raised in the locality to work the guns. They should be frequently exercised in manning the works assigned to them, and should be annually given facilities for

target practice at ranges on the sea coast with guns of the same type as those which they would be required to handle in case of invasion. But the heavy artillery required to operate with the field army should consist of regular troops, for the reason that the needs of the Empire may require them to serve abroad, and it is of no use to waste money in providing a force solely available for home service. I have already said that I would prefer volunteers to militia for service as garrison artillery in the United Kingdom; my reason for this preference is that I believe that it would be possible to get a better class of men by means of the volunteers, and that they would also be cheaper, both considerations which cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER VIII

DEPARTMENTAL CORPS

The Royal Engineers—Defects of Existing Organisation—The Duties of Royal Engineers in Peace and War—Suggested Reforms—The Army Service Corps—Supply and Transport—The Royal Army Medical Corps—Its Weak Points—Suggested Improvements in Organisation—The Army Pay Department—The Ordnance Department.

In this chapter I intend to refer briefly to the corps of Royal Engineers and to the Departmental services of the army. Under the existing organisation the Royal Engineers are organised in one unwieldy corps, to various portions of which the most diverse duties are assigned. A portion of the corps devotes its time to the maintenance, repair, and erection of

barracks, another portion controls the management of military telegraphs and lines of railway, another controls the torpedo defence of our commercial ports, while another is designed for the strictly military duties which devolve upon engineers in the field, including field work, bridging, and ballooning. But there is no strict division between the different branches of the corps. For instance, in the Boer war many officers who had spent years in looking after the sanitary and other repairs to barracks, etc., were suddenly despatched to the front for service in field companies, a system which is hardly likely to lead to the best results.

Very many complaints have been made, with a certain amount of justification, against the corps of Royal Engineers, as at present organised. In the first place, it has been alleged that the corps is not fitted for such work as the preparation of plans for new barracks, nor for the repair and maintenance of existing barracks. The present system is said to lead to extravagance and to

numerous other abuses, as engineer officers receive neither the business training nor the technical instruction required for the supervision of the work of the contractors, to whom the practical work of barrack construction and repair has necessarily to be entrusted. In all this there is a good deal of truth. There has been a great deal of extravagance in connection with the expenditure on military works, and there can be no doubt that the nation has not succeeded in obtaining full value for the large sums which have been expended on these purposes of late years. As regards the field companies, it has been alleged that the practice of employing Royal Engineers for the construction of field works, and for the preparation of the plans of hasty entrenchments, has led to a tendency to rely too much upon the Royal Engineers, and a consequent helplessness on the part of troops of the other arms in the absence of engineers. An instance of this may be found in the battle of Spion Kop, where the preparation of shelter against the

fire of the enemy was left mainly to the Royal Engineers, with the result that insufficient shelter was provided, and the trace of such works as were executed was found to be faulty in the extreme, and open to enfilade fire from adjoining positions in the hands of the enemy. This was due chiefly to the fact that the topography of the country surrounding the summit was unknown, that the troops waited for the sappers to do the necessary work, instead of undertaking it themselves, and that the thick weather of the early morning concealed the neighbouring features from the officer in charge. But no one will deny the Royal Engineers credit for what they did do on that calamitous day; no one can deny that both officers and sappers showed the most heroic gallantry, and that both paid heavily for that gallantry with their lives.

But this leads us back to the fact that the preparation of field defences is no part of the duty of Royal Engineers. The art of field fortification is one which ought to

be easily attainable by every infantry and cavalry officer. We have seen for ourselves that the Boers, without any technical training, showed themselves masters of the art, and all arms of the service should be able to construct works for their own defence without having to rely on the superior technical knowledge of the Royal Engineer. But this must not be taken as implying that there is no use for the Royal Engineer in modern warfare. On the contrary, his sphere of usefulness is now greatly enlarged, as he should be responsible for the repair and demolition of bridges and railways, for the working of the latter, for the direction of field telegraphs and telephones, for the working of the balloon detachments, and for the preparation of careful topographical surveys of localities which are likely to form a portion of the field of operations. The great majority of these duties requires careful technical training and considerable mobility; therefore, I am strongly of opinion that the engineers ought to be organised into a corps, chiefly mounted, with all ranks carefully trained in the

execution of the important duties which will fall to their lot in time of war, and that their present duties in connection with the preparation of contracts, the supervision of contractors, and the maintenance, erection, and repair of barracks should either be taken away from them altogether and entrusted to a civil department, or should be allotted to an entirely distinct portion of the corps.

In conclusion, the number of field companies and pontoon troops should be considerably increased, and neither officers nor men should be liable to foreign service except in India and South Africa. Units for the provision of the required relieving drafts should be maintained in this country, the sappers enrolled for eight years with the colours, four in the first-class reserve and till attaining the age of forty-five in the second-class reserve, those *cadres*, not required to furnish relieving drafts, simply existing for the purpose of training men and passing them direct into the first-class reserve, whence they will eventually pass, in the same manner as

their longer service comrades, into the second-class reserve. As regards their training, it will be necessary, in view of the increased importance now attaching to railways as a means of communication, to form a separate corps of railway engineers for field service, and officers of this corps should be always attached to the principal railway companies in this country to obtain an insight into the method of working lines of various capacity, and of rapidly repairing breakdowns as they occur. It ought to be possible to affiliate to this subdivision of the corps a certain number of civilian railway engineers, who would undertake, on receipt of a small annual retaining fee, to give their services in the field in case of war. The vagaries of the average railway staff officer, a youngster absolutely unskilled in railway management and plucked green from his regiment, have, during the Boer war, been sufficiently remarkable and sufficiently irritating to warn us that we must in future make some endeavour to train officers for this duty in time of peace.

The next important department of the army is the Army Service Corps, a department which in the Boer war has done the most excellent service and has well deserved the thanks of the country. In this department, beyond adding to its strength to a certain extent and endeavouring to provide it with as large a reserve of trained officers and men as may be possible, I would make no changes beyond suggesting that the existing supply, transport, and barrack departments should be kept distinct in future, and we should give up the practice of endeavouring to make officers of this useful corps masters of all trades. One occasionally finds that the same man will make an excellent supply officer and an equally valuable transport officer, but such men are rare. During the preliminary Aldershot course it ought to be an easy matter to ascertain the bent and capabilities of each officer, with a view to posting him finally to that branch of the service in which he is most likely to prove useful. As for regimental transport, I imagine that we shall hear but little more of that exceedingly wasteful

method of arranging for the carriage of military supplies. If the Boer war has shown us anything, it is that regimental transport is far too extravagant a system to find any place in an up-to-date military organisation for war.

Coming now to the Royal Army Medical Corps, the first thing that strikes an investigator is that there is an enormous difference between the importance of the duties which fall upon this department in peace and those which it is required to perform in time of war. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that the corps should be organised upon a system which will allow of its indefinite expansion, and it is fortunate that this should be a matter of comparatively easy arrangement, as very little special or technical training is required beyond that which is gone through by every medical man. In the Boer war we have seen that many of the civilian hospitals performed fully as efficient service as those run entirely by the R.A.M.C., from which we may infer that the sick or wounded soldier is very much like the sick or wounded civilian, and that men who are competent

to treat the one are equally well fitted to care for the other. For this reason it will be possible to rely very largely upon civilian assistance to provide the increased medical and surgical staffs required in case of war, but it is most advisable that some effort should be made to provide for our possible needs in this direction in time of peace, and young civilian surgeons should be encouraged to register themselves in the reserve of officers, being paid a retaining fee to obtain first call upon their services when required. In the same manner the supply of extra nurses for time of war could easily be arranged for, but this will not obviate the necessity for a considerable increase in the permanent military medical organisation. Both officers and men of the Royal Army Medical Corps are now overworked in time of peace, a fact which in a measure accounts for the difficulty which the Government experiences in getting men of sufficient ability to take commissions as medical officers. Complaints have been freely made that a medical officer under existing circumstances is without any incentives to

study and is denied opportunities of obtaining experience in the principal London hospitals. Moreover, there is no doubt that the greater part of the time of the senior officers of the R.A.M.C. is taken up with correspondence, the compilation of returns, the administration of discipline and other details, to the exclusion of their proper medical work. All this requires looking into and remedying.

As regards the Army Pay and Ordnance Departments, my recommendations with regard to them will become clearer when I come to the subject of the reorganisation of the remodelled units composing the army at home and abroad. Those who have read "The Army From Within" will have an idea of the direction in which reform will approach the Pay Department, my chief recommendation being, as I have explained in that book, that the officers of this department should be entrusted with the duties of issuing pay to the men of the army, a duty which, with all its concomitant correspondence and account-keeping, now devolves upon the com-

batant officer, thus taking up his time to the exclusion of his more strictly military duties. Each regiment or battalion should have its own paymaster, in the same manner as each man-of-war has its own paymaster, and these regimental paymasters should correspond direct with the War Office, or preferably with the Chief Paymaster of the army corps in which the unit to which he belonged happens to be serving. The paymasters of the 3rd or sedentary battalions would, in addition to their regimental duties, be charged with the payment of pensioners and reservists belonging to their territorial district, and would have in readiness, at all times, all the papers and forms which would be required in the case of a general mobilisation.

This Ordnance Department might very well be left as it is, but in each district a supply of all the articles which would be required on mobilisation should be always in readiness, larger reserves than at present ought to be maintained, and the number of army forms now in use, which is absurd and tends to throw difficulties in the way

of the discharge of business, should be very greatly reduced. The Ordnance Department should be relieved of all duties connected with the examination and passing of goods received from contractors, and should have nothing whatever to do with the issue of naval stores or weapons.

CHAPTER IX

DEFECTS EXPOSED BY WAR

The Army as a Whole—Its Present Organisation—Its Defects—The South African War—A Higgledy-Piggledy System—The Scheme Proposed—The Army Corps and their Staffs—Mobilisation for War — The Proportion of the Three Arms.

In this chapter I propose to discuss the organisation of the complete units whose formation I have gone into at some length in the earlier chapters of this book. Under the existing system the troops in the United Kingdom, none of them in a state of readiness for service, are quartered in one of sixteen military districts, without the smallest regard to our military require-

ments in case of war. Very many of them are stationed in towns and in densely populated neighbourhoods where it is impossible to carry out any useful instructional work, the sole consideration which has been regarded having apparently been the situation of existing barracks. Where there were barracks to be filled, there troops have been placed to fill them, and where, as at Aldershot, it was possible to assemble considerable numbers of troops, there they have been brigaded for instruction, without the smallest intention of ever sending them on service in the brigades in which they had been trained in peace.

When the Boer war broke out, an army corps, in the first instance, and smaller units subsequently, were formed by breaking up all the existing organisations larger than a battalion, and by grouping afresh the troops into fresh units, under new commanding officers, frequently strangers to their troops and to their staff officers, while the organisations thus extemporised were again in many instances broken up afresh and re-modelled on arrival in South Africa. Nor was there a supply of trained

commanding officers and staff available for these brigades and divisions thus hastily scraped together. Such major-generals as could be trusted were appointed to the commands of brigades, and of even larger units, but there were not enough to go round—not enough, that is to say, in favour at Pall Mall, consequently more than one comfortable old colonel, who had spent the last few years in a cosy office, hatching "memos" and incubating batches of official correspondence, had to be dug out of his office chair and placed in an uneasy seat at the head of an infantry brigade.

The mobilisation of the first-class army reserve was a success; that is to say, there was a remarkably small percentage of absentees, but once the reserve had been absorbed to fill up the gaps in the battalions for the front, we had very little left to replace the waste of active service. In fact, the calling out of the reserve simply meant the cancelling of the furloughs of more than half of our first line; of reserve, in its true sense, we were entirely deficient. It is true that in the militia reserve we

had some 30,000 militiamen liable to service in the regular army in case of need, but the employment of these men necessarily emasculated the militia battalions from which they came. The army corps—that is, the higgledy-piggledy organisation which we were pleased to call the army corps—went out, amidst scenes of tremendous enthusiasm, and we almost immediately made the painful discovery that it was not nearly equal to the task before it. More troops were needed. More scratch brigades were scraped together, with scratch commanders, a scratch staff, and in many cases even scratch regimental officers, and still the cry for more was echoed from the theatre of war.

We sent out, after a considerable interval, the very best officers and men we had. Nobody was spared, nobody wished to be spared. In that hour of danger, the first thought and the first wish of every citizen of the Empire, whether in England, Australia, Canada, or India, was to do his best to pull the old country out of the mess into which she had drifted. The

yeomen and volunteers, not liable to foreign service, gladly volunteered in considerable numbers for South African service. Eventually the original field force of some 60,000 men had grown into an army of upwards of 200,000; the country had been stripped of her fighting men; in our barracks were none but recruits and reserve battalions obtained by the offer of an extravagant bounty, the latter sadly wanting in officers. Of actual military force equal to the task of repelling a foreign foe we had been absolutely denuded.

The best of the militia battalions, voluntarily undertaking a duty to which they were not liable, had been sent to South Africa; those that remained—short of officers, and with their ranks filled with immature lads—did not constitute a force calculated to inspire confidence. And all this time the war went on; disease and hostile bullets thinned our ranks, constant drafts were needed, and seasoned men were scarce. Without going further into this pitiful exposure of our military weakness, it

will be enough to say that our army system, exposed to a much lighter test than it would have been called upon to stand had we gone to war with America over Venezuela, with France over Fashoda, with Germany over the Kaiser's telegram to President Kruger, or with Russia over Port Arthur, all occasions when war was very near to us, had utterly and completely broken down.

The above brief recapitulation of the facts attending the mobilisation and the prosecution of the war will have indicated the defects which in any future system we must endeavour to avoid. Let us now examine how the system I propose would work out, commencing with a sketch of the organisation which I would substitute for that of the existing military districts. It has lately been said by officers in a position to speak with some authority that the army corps organisation is unsuited to our requirements. I must confess that I fail to see the proof of this. I am willing to admit that such an organisation is

unsuited to our requirements if we rely on improvising the army corps and its staff on the very threshold of war; but there is no reason why we should not substitute for the district organisation an army corps organisation which would work both in peace and war equally well.

For this reason I propose to retain the army corps organisation, which is quite as well suited to us as to the military Powers of the Continent, who are unanimous in recognising its merits. In short, for the existing districts I would substitute army corps. The troops of the first army corps would be quartered in the South of England, the headquarters of the corps being at Aldershot, where two divisions would be permanently stationed, the third infantry division being quartered at Dover, Shorncliffe, and Lydd. At Aldershot also would be the cavalry division, the bulk of the artillery, the engineers and administrative services, while the whole staff should be the staff, commanding officer included, who would embark with the corps in case of war. Naturally the first division

would consist of those units which, as I have already explained, would be relieved of the duty of furnishing foreign drafts with a view to their being employed on small wars. On the time coming for battalions or regiments to be removed from this establishment they would, of course, be moved from Aldershot and replaced in the first division by the units selected for the higher establishment. But brigades would always be kept intact, and the brigadiers would invariably be those officers who would command the brigades in event of war. And the same rule would be followed in the selection of the staff. No officer would be employed in peace time in a capacity which he was not thought fit to fill in war. Further, any officers who proved their unfitness for a certain post should be at once removed from it.

Into this army corps organisation I would only bring, in the first instance, the second battalions of all battalions at home, the third battalions being provided for as will be subsequently explained. On mobilisation, if a small force only were

required, say one army corps—something more than the one or two divisions kept always ready for service—the A division of the first-class army reserve, for those battalions and regiments in the first army corps only, would be called up in sufficient numbers to take the places of all men in the first two years of their service or under twenty years of age—that is to say, about 200 reservists would be required for each infantry battalion, and about 120 for each regiment of cavalry. On the army corps sailing, the details left behind would be at once sent to their depôts and the second army corps, quartered, say, at York, or rather in what is now the York district, will at once be mobilised and moved to Aldershot, in readiness for eventualities.

But should it become apparent that the country was involved in a serious campaign, a general mobilisation of the first-class army reserve, of all the four army corps into which the one hundred and six second battalions at home had been organised, would be ordered, and with this object sufficient men of class A of the

first-class army reserve would be called out. This would take but little more than twenty thousand men, leaving fifty thousand still available to furnish drafts, and to supply the waste of war. These fifty thousand men would join at their depôts, be organised, with the aid of the reserve officers already alluded to, into reserve battalions, being brought up to their full strength by making a call upon the B division of the first-class reserve. On drafts being required for the front, complete companies with their officers would invariably be sent from the reserve battalions, which would remain at home. Assuming that some forty thousand men from this class will be needed to bring up these reserve battalions to their full strength, we shall be left with over one hundred thousand men in class B available for the mobilisation of the depôt battalions or third battalions.

This number ought to be amply sufficient, and, in the event of a really big war, it is probable that the mobilisation of the third battalions, and of the reserve

battalions would go on side by side. The organisation I have sketched out would thus give us the infantry of four army corps ready for service in the first line, twice that number of battalions in the second line, and an untouched reserve of about five hundred thousand men, irrespective of the cavalry and artillery reserves. In fact, England would be in an infinitely stronger military position than she had ever been in before.

I have already said that the permanent organisation of the home army would take the form of a division, into four army corps, three of these being in Great Britain, and the fourth in Ireland. For this force the supply of infantry would be ample; now comes the question of the available strength of troops of the other arms. To take the case of the cavalry first. I have already explained that, under the system I propose, we would only have, in ordinary circumstances, sixteen regiments at home and sixteen abroad. The minimum allowance of cavalry to an army corps is seven regiments, three in each

cavalry brigade and one regiment as divisional cavalry. Therefore, our sixteen regiments will only give us sufficient cavalry for two army corps and two over, or five over if we include the regiments of Household Cavalry. But we shall have sixteen squadrons at home in preparation for foreign service; by calling out the reserve of the regiments abroad, taking, in the first instance, those men of section A who have most recently gone to the reserve, we shall be at once able to expand these sixteen squadrons into sixteen additional regiments, which, with the Household Cavalry and the regiments over after supplying the needs of the first two army corps, will give us sufficient cavalry for three more army corps if required. Here, again, it will be necessary to make a call upon the officers of the reserve. In an early chapter of this little book I have stated that the system suited to our needs must give us a moderate force fit for immediate service and a large and powerful army fit to go on service within three or four months of the declaration of war, on the assumption that the navy will require somewhere about that

time to make good its claim to the command of the seas. By the time these three months have elapsed, if they have been judiciously employed, all the units mobilised as I have described on the declaration of war would be quite fit for service. In another place I propose to discuss the manner in which the army system I have described could be utilised to give us, without any delay whatever, a force able to deal with any sudden attempt at invasion of the nature of a raid.

As regards artillery mobilisation for a great war, I have already explained that, in the present transition state of artillery, and the many changes both in tactical and administrative organisation which are probably in store, I have not thought it necessary to go as closely into the details of artillery organisation as into that of the other arms. I may, however, point out that the number of batteries to an army corps has been fixed at from twenty to twenty-two batteries, according to the number of horse batteries with the cavalry division. That is to say, there would

usually be eighteen field batteries to each corps and either one or two brigade divisions of Horse Artillery. As I have put the cavalry strength to each corps at two brigades, and as in the future it is very improbable that less than a brigade division of Horse Artillery will be given to each brigade, we may take the higher number as the more likely to fit in with our requirements. We may, I think, rely upon our having always at home at least twelve horse batteries, or enough for three army corps and something like eighty field batteries, or more than would be required to provide eighteen batteries a-piece to the four army corps which my plan would give us for our first line. Now, assuming that we have an adequate reserve of guns, we shall have no difficulty in forming at least twenty more batteries, going to the reserve of officers for our officers and to section A of the first-class artillery reserve for our men, for enough men would be available after relieving the young soldiers in the batteries going straight on service.

By this time one of the chief defects in the system I propose will have become clear to my readers, that being that, whereas each corps of the first four corps for service should be complete in *personnel* and in staff, excepting only those reservists of the first class required to take the place of the young soldiers, yet sufficient cavalry are not provided to fulfil this very desirable condition. The first two corps for service will have their cavalry, the third will have but two regiments and the Household Cavalry, the fourth, stationed in Ireland, will have no cavalry at all. This is a serious blot in the scheme, and one which many would propose to remedy by only allotting one instead of two cavalry brigades to a division in time of peace, an expedient which would give us just sufficient cavalry to go round, permitting of one brigade and one regiment of divisional cavalry being allotted to each army corps. This expedient is tempting, but it must not be adopted in consequence of the vital importance that our cavalry should be trained in peace under the eye of the commander who will direct

their movements in war. It is of the utmost importance that this officer should have an intimate personal knowledge of the officers commanding both brigades and regiments in his division, and on no account, even to lend symmetry to an otherwise somewhat lop-sided scheme, should regiments be removed from the organisation in which they will have to fight in war.

Under the circumstances, if we grudge the expense of maintaining in peace time the cavalry of four army corps, we must make up our minds to leave Ireland without cavalry, unless the second corps is allotted to Ireland instead of to England, which, in view of the many charms of Ireland as a cavalry quarter, might have many points to recommend it.

Otherwise the difficulty might be temporarily got over by attaching the mounted infantry at home to the fourth corps, thus placing at the disposal of the officer commanding the corps a sufficiency of mounted men for the purpose of carrying out corps manœuvres.

I have been compelled to skim quickly over the salient points of the organisation I propose, as it relates to mobilisation for war; in the following chapter I intend to touch briefly upon the subject of defence against sudden raids, the selections and training of staff officers, the general administration of the army and the functions of the War Office, all important subjects to which I would gladly devote much greater space than is at my disposal.

CHAPTER X

THE DUTIES OF THE WAR OFFICE

Defence against Raids — The Enemy's Objective — The Chances of Success — Conditions which must be fulfilled — The Forces available for Defence — The Duties of the War Office—The Interior Economy of the Army Corps — The District Officers — Decentralisation — The Staff, its Selection and Training—Training and Pay o Reserve.

I HAVE already pointed out that no serious invasion of this country on a large scale could be attempted till our fleet had been wiped out, and that in such a contingency England could quickly be starved into submission without risking a single soldier upon our soil. Therefore I do not intend

to waste time in discussing the arrangements which should be made to meet so remote a contingency. But the possibility of a raid must be faced, and the first thing to be considered in this connection is the form which such an enterprise would be likely to take, what points are most likely to be the enemy's objective, and what are the conditions necessary to give him a good chance of success?

To commence with, an enemy could hardly hope to finish a war at one blow by a raid, however successful. He might, owing to the temporary absence of our fleet, be able to throw an army across the Channel, and that army, if feebly opposed, might succeed in gaining its objective, in doing us an enormous amount of "moral and material" damage, and even possibly succeed in obtaining permission to retire with the honours of war by the threat of laying our capital in ashes; but it could not hope to finish the war or even to draw supplies and reinforcements from its own country, as the

superior British Fleet would quickly intervene, and all communications between the invaders and their base would be promptly severed. Such an attempt, therefore, would depend for its success on our unpreparedness, and consequently would almost certainly only be put into execution as the opening blow of the campaign. It would be an act of folly to strike at our territories when our forces had been mobilised, when the whole country rang with the clash of arms, and troops swarmed in every district. Once war had been declared, or even decided on, and the order to mobilise had been flashed throughout the land, no raid would have the slightest prospect of success; it could only succeed, to the limited extent to which success is possible, if launched at us before we had realised that war was in the air. In such a case, unless we had prepared in peace time to meet and frustrate such an attempt, a sudden attack might cause us incalculable damage. Our mobilisation might be

checked, many of our depôts of stores would be destroyed, and important arsenals might be laid in ashes, thus rendering it much more difficult for us to put forth our strength and to crush the foe who had provoked us to war.

Supposing, then, a raid upon our shores only possible as a bolt from the blue, in time of strained relations with our future enemy certainly, but before we had realised that war was inevitable, at what objective would the enemy inevitably strike? Most certainly at London, and at London alone. We have other wealthy and important cities, we have great dockyards and busy arsenals in the North and centre of England, but none of these offer so tempting a bait as London, and, more important still, none are so accessible to our possible foes. To be successful, the raid must be unexpected, no accumulation of shipping must have preceded it, but the army of invasion must be packed hurriedly into small craft and such other vessels as may happen to lie

alongside the quays of our enemy's harbours. This condition necessitates a short sea voyage, one not exceeding three or four hours at the utmost, the slowest ships setting the pace of the fleet of transports. If the selected spot for disembarkation cannot be reached within this time, it will be necessary to use larger vessels, the chances of a sudden change of weather will have to be faced, and more ships will be needed, as it will not be possible to crowd up men and horses as they could well be crowded for a sea-trip of two or three hours. In fact, difficulties would increase in geometrical progression for every hour added to the length of the voyage. Therefore, I cannot but conclude that we have here another reason for anticipating that London, close to which lies our great arsenal of Woolwich, would be the enemy's objective, and that the landing, if made at all, would be made upon our coast between Portsmouth and the mouth of the Thames.

The subject of such a raid has

been a good deal discussed of late, and I have nowhere seen the raiding force put at a higher figure than 100,000 men; it is, I think, exceedingly problematical that so large a force could be landed in the time available, but, taking that for granted, we have to make some provision in our military organisation for a force able to bring an invading army of this strength to a standstill. The crisis will occur within twenty-four hours of landing; will it be possible within that time to bar the advance of the invader with a force equal to the task of holding him till reinforcements can be hurried from more distant parts of the country? To concentrate the necessary force quickly will require careful organisation, and the plan decided on should be occasionally rehearsed, so that everyone concerned, including the railway companies, may be fully aware of their duty in the emergency and may be able to perform it with exactness and precision.

In the first place, as regards troops,

I have already explained that the first army corps will be quartered at Aldershot, with the exception of one division stationed at Dover, Shorncliffe, and Lydd. At Aldershot will be the cavalry division, at Canterbury a number of cavalry details, mostly recruits under preliminary training. We have, under the existing system, eleven regimental depôts in London and the south-eastern corner of England; as, under my scheme, the number of territorial districts will be increased from sixty-seven to one hundred, it is only reasonable to suppose that this populous part of the country will have its number of depôts proportionately increased, which will give us some sixteen or seventeen depôts with their third or sedentary battalions also available to aid in repelling a raid. Thus within some three or four hours' rail of London, or of the prepared positions from which London will be defended, we shall find at any time over 60,000 troops, amongst them a complete cavalry division and the artillery of an army corps. The

positions on which the invaders will be brought to a stand will be already armed with powerful long-ranging guns of position, of far greater range and power than any which can be in the possession of the enemy. The gun detachments, formed by artillery volunteers living close at hand, can be in their places within an hour of the alarm being given, and by that time the leading infantry allotted to the defence will be already moving into position. We have lately seen the advantages which the possession of long-range artillery and magazine rifles, firing smokeless powder, confers on the defence; this increased power given to the defence by recent developments in fire-arms would render it a comparatively easy matter for the troops I have above enumerated to bring the invading army to a halt. Meanwhile, every moment will bring reinforcements nearer. No mobilisation, in the ordinary sense, would be required. For the brief campaign, for a raid must either succeed at once or fail disas-

trously, every man but the last-joined recruits could be kept in the ranks, and but a little time would elapse before the second army corps, complete in guns and cavalry, was on the scene, and the simultaneous arrival of the numerous depôt battalions from the densely-populated midland counties would speedily give to the defenders the advantage of numbers. The raid would have failed.

In fact, the mere adoption of my scheme for army reorganisation would effectually put a stop to all the wild talk of invasion which occasionally reaches us from the other side of the Channel. Invasion would be recognised as an impracticable operation, unless, as before said, in the event of the destruction of our fleet, when it would be unnecessary.

I trust that my readers will now recognise that my scheme would render the country at least as safe against invasion as our existing organisation. On this assumption I will now go on to discuss the question of the general

administration of the army, as fully as can be done in the limited space at my disposal. I have already explained that I would substitute an organisation by army corps for the "district" organisation now existing, each army corps being commanded by the general officer who would lead it in action, and administered by the staff who would accompany it on service. On service the most ample powers for the administration of his command and the maintenance of discipline within it are entrusted to general officers. There is no valid reason why similar powers should not be given to these officers in time of peace.

The constant reference to the War Office of the thousands of trivial matters which now provide the principal excuse for the maintenance of an enormous civilian staff should cease. The General in command of each corps would be authorised to deal with all such matters on his own responsibility. He would be authorised to correspond directly with the commanders of other

corps, and would thus be enabled to arrange all such matters as the movements of troops, engineer services, matters of discipline, the acquirement, equipment, and maintenance of rifle and artillery ranges, transport and supply, etc., without any reference to the War Office. The Chief Paymaster of each corps would be responsible for the audit of all the military accounts of the corps, only questions of principle being referred to Pall Mall, and, similarly, the remount officer of each corps would correspond direct with the remount department on the subject of the supply of the horses and other animals required. All contracts for forage and other supplies would be assigned by the staff officers of the army corps concerned, being merely reported to the War Office for their information, and the entire training of the troops should be entrusted to the responsible officer who will have to command them in war.

In fact, to put it shortly, the War Office will cease to be a great centre

of administration, and will become instead the chief inspecting authority—on the military side—and, on the civil side, the office in which the Army Estimates are prepared, and in which a general supervision is exercised over the supply of munitions of war, clothing, and other military stores to the various army corps. But the corps will correspond directly with the great manufacturing departments, the War Office being referred to only in cases where civilian manufacturers are entrusted with the duty of supplying articles of military equipment. In these cases the War Office will indicate the sources of supply; this being done, the corps commander will place himself in communication with the firm named to him, will arrange for the supply of his wants, and will himself arrange for the proper inspection of the articles supplied, being responsible that they are up to the required standard. To each army corps commander will be allotted the funds necessary for the needs of every portion of his command,

he being held responsible for all expenditure, and he will furnish every year an estimate of the requirements of his corps for the ensuing twelve months. He will, however, not be responsible for the military training and efficiency of the sedentary or depôt battalions stationed in the district in which his army corps is quartered; his command has nothing to do with locality or with territorial boundaries; he is responsible solely for the troops belonging to his corps, and for the maintenance of the buildings which they inhabit and the rifle and other ranges on which they are trained. As it will usually be the case that these ranges are also used for the training of the sedentary battalions, he will be to that extent responsible that they are afforded the means of maintaining their efficiency, but the training and command of these battalions and of all the reserve forces quartered within the limits of his command will be entrusted to an officer of general's rank, but junior to the corps com-

mander, who will hold a purely territorial command, as contrasted with the corps command exercised by the officer of higher rank.

In fact, this officer will somewhat correspond with the present district officer, and will correspond with the corps' commander direct on all matters which may arise in connection with their respective commands. He will be responsible for the payment of the sedentary and reserve forces in his district, and will never leave his district to go on service. When war breaks out, the army corps, with its general and staff, will depart for the front, the officer in charge of the sedentary battalions and reserves—whom I will call the District Officer—will remain. He will be responsible for the mobilisation of the reserves in his district, and will control the whole of the arrangements for their mobilisation, on a scheme prepared by himself and approved by the War Office.

In the case of the 1st Army Corps being mobilised and departing on service,

the second corps will at once mobilise and be moved to Aldershot, the third corps will then move to the stations vacated by the second—should this be deemed advisable—and will prepare for mobilisation; but the District Officers, with their mobilisation and training staffs, will be free to devote themselves to their special duties, and will have nothing to do with the movements of the troops of the army corps, or with the preparing of these troops for service, beyond supplying from their districts the reservists required to complete.

The War Office will control the appointment and promotion of officers, as at present, acting usually on the recommendations of corps commanders as far as possible. The War Office will also appoint officers of rank and wide experience as inspecting officers of the different arms; these officers will visit all the corps in turn, and will report to the Commander-in-Chief on the mode of training in force in each command and on the efficiency of the

troops. The Commander-in-Chief will himself be present at all manœuvres, will appoint the Umpire Staff and will supervise the preparation of the schemes. He will also decide, after consultation with the Secretary of State, when manœuvres are necessary and will recommend the district which should be proclaimed under the Manœuvre Act. When funds allow and are available, and when there is no other valid objection, the Secretary of State will act on the recommendations of the Commander-in-Chief, who, it must be remembered, will be wholly and absolutely responsible to the Secretary of State and to the nation for the fitness of the army for war.

As I have already said, each army corps will furnish an estimate of the funds required in the ensuing year. These estimates will form the basis of the Army Estimates, but will not be laid before the Secretary of State till they have been finally passed and sanctioned by the Commander-in-Chief, who will exercise a severe check on

any expenditure not in his opinion necessary for the efficiency of the army. The Treasury will inform the Secretary of State of the funds which will be available, and the Commander-in-Chief must be responsible for keeping expenditure within the limits thus pointed out. In any case the Commander-in-Chief will prepare an annual certificate to be laid before Parliament, together with the estimates, to the effect that the army is efficient and well supplied with munitions of war, or otherwise, as the case may be.

Nothing must be allowed to weaken his responsibility for the military efficiency of the force he commands. The Secretary of State must be responsible for the general government of the army, for the selection of the Commander-in-Chief for instance, should that office fall vacant, but the soldier in command of the army must be held responsible for its fitness for war. This is absolutely vital. On this point there must be no compromise.

As regards the training and formation

of the staff, I would leave that duty with the military side of the War Office as at present, making the Adjutant-General responsible to the Commander-in-Chief for the efficiency of the staff. The Staff College should be considerably enlarged, and the system of open competition now in force should be abolished. In "The Army From Within" I have gone into the subject of the examination of officers for promotion; if the promotion examinations were conducted on the system I have there explained, we should at once attain a much higher level of professional efficiency than we can expect at present, and in that case it would be possible to nominate for the Staff College those officers who passed highest in each year at their promotion examination for the rank of captain, provided that they are recommended by their regimental commanding officers as being good horsemen, and in other respects well fitted for staff service. Officers thus selected would go to the Staff College for two years, be

attached, as at present, to other arms for a fixed period, and would then be required to spend not less than two years with their regiments before being given employment on the staff.

Moreover, on vacating a staff appointment officers should be compelled to return to regimental duty for two years; this rule is now in existence, but is never enforced where the officer concerned has sufficient private influence at his back. Finally, all officers nominated for the Staff College should be at once seconded in their regiments. It is not fair that, as is the case at present, their brother officers should have to do their work in their absence. By the adoption of the plan of selection which I have advocated it would be possible to reduce very considerably the influence which the possession of private means, and the consequent ability to procure a good crammer, now has on the professional prospects of officers. It would not pay to employ crammers

for the promotion examination. In the first place, the date of these examinations would be uncertain, and no officer would know when he was to be called upon to pass. In fact, the system I have explained in "The Army From Within" would make it necessary for every officer to keep himself always thoroughly well up in his profession. He would not be able to trust to a spurt of industry to carry him creditably through his promotion examinations.

With reference to the formation of a staff, there is one other point to which I will draw attention—namely, the employment of reserve officers on the staff in time of war. I would recommend the annual admission of a small number of selected reserve officers annually to the Staff College, and I would also advise the annual selection of a limited number of officers of the reserve for special training in the management of railway traffic, so as to enable them to perform the duties of railway staff officers in time

of war. With the increasing part which railways play in military operations, it is of great importance that we should be able to lay our hands at any moment on a considerable number of officers well versed in the management of traffic, and fully competent to take charge of considerable sections of the railways forming the lines of communications of the army in the field.

There is one other department of the staff which must be referred to; I allude to the question of maritime transport over-sea. The system of leaving this department in naval charge has worked so satisfactorily that I can see no reason for altering it. In future, as heretofore, the naval authorities will provide the vessels, and the responsibility of the military authorities will end when the troops and their stores are placed on the quays alongside the ships waiting for their reception.

As for the training of the reserve, those portions of it which are allotted under my scheme to battalions, with the reserve officers told off to these

battalions, will train annually for a week in the same manner as the volunteers do now, being required, in addition, to fire annually a certain number of rounds in their own time, the amount of pay which they will receive for this depending on the figure of merit which they obtain. Those reservists not allotted to reserve battalions, who, on mobilisation, will be drafted to battalions of the first line to take the place of immature men and to replace casualties, will be required to come out for training with the sedentary battalions once in three years for the first six years of their reserve service, and once in six years subsequently, being also required to fire annually a certain number of rounds in their own time. As regards reserve pay, men in the first-class reserve will receive pay as at present; men in the second-class reserve will only be paid when out for training, but will receive annual gratuities according to the results of their rifle practice, and a small gratuity on presenting themselves for

their annual medical examination. On being found medically unfit for further service, or on attaining forty-five years of age, they will be finally struck off the reserve, but, if in indigent circumstances, will be entitled to an old-age pension sufficient to support them on reaching the age of sixty years, men who had served for the longer term with the colours being entitled to a pension on a higher scale than those who had only served for three years.

CHAPTER XI

SOME LEADING PRINCIPLES

Prospects of Army Reform — The Value of the Auxiliary Forces — Erroneous Conceptions of Home Defence — Conclusion.

And now I have finished, and I may be asked if I imagine there is the smallest chance of the revolutionary scheme of reform which I have sketched out being ever put into force. To this I would answer "Not the slightest." I have very little hope of anything being done to make our army really efficient or to provide efficient reserves. If anything is

done it will take the place of a small increase of pay, to improve recruiting—which may be effectual for a short time, but is more likely to have no effect whatever—and something may be done to give additional training to the militia and volunteers.

A scheme which, like mine, recommends the entire abolition of both the militia and volunteers has not the smallest chance of acceptance. These so-called auxiliary forces provide such an excellent opportunity for throwing dust into the eyes of the public, a process which the public rather enjoys than otherwise, that no Government would willingly relegate them to the limbo of banished abuses. Moreover, public opinion in this country is not yet sufficiently educated to realise that these forces, however efficient, have really no place in any sound scheme for the defence of the Empire.

To maintain a large force which we cannot send abroad is a mere piece of wasteful extravagance. I know that it will be said that we would have been in a tight place in this war if we had not

had the yeomanry, the militia, and the volunteers to fall back upon, and the good performances of these branches of the service will certainly be thrown in my teeth. This will not in the least affect my argument. Of course, when our army system broke down entirely, as it did the other day, we had to scrape together all the untrained and partially trained men we could from any source from which we could get them, but it must not be forgotten that, though many militia battalions did volunteer for the front, certain corps did not, and many men refused to go out even in the battalions which went. And the volunteer contingents were mostly scraped together from several corps. As for the Imperial Yeomanry, the majority of the men who went out in this corps were civilians pure and simple. To call them yeomanry was ridiculous and misleading. The large majority of them were townsmen.

In short, we have not now, and we never have had, nor under existing circumstances

are we ever likely to have, any yeomanry regiment, any militia battalion, or any volunteer corps fit to take the field as a complete unit under its own officers. This is a statement which cannot be contradicted.

This is the fruit of our present system. We maintain an enormous paper army of auxiliary troops, which are, in their present form, absolutely useless for war. The sole effect is to place us in a position of false security; as the Chinese would say, we are thus enabled to "save our face." Let no one imagine that our possible enemies on the Continent are under any illusion as to the value of the auxiliary forces. They fully realise the weak points of our system. It cannot be too often reiterated that we need fear no invasion more serious than a raid. Such an attempt could easily be defeated by the regular forces at home, if properly organised. In fact, the issue would be settled one way or another before three-fourths of our volunteers were under arms. Why, then, maintain large forces which cannot be

employed abroad, which are inadequately trained, which are not organised for war in any way, and which would never be of any use under any conceivable circumstances?

We have many illusions as regards the volunteers; we have even more as regards the militia. For instance, it is commonly accepted, even by men who ought to know better, that a larger number of seasoned soldiers will be found in militia battalions than in line battalions. This is an absurd fallacy for which there is no justification. Recruits are enlisted for the militia when they are able to persuade a recruiting sergeant, only too willing to believe them, that they are seventeen years old. As a matter of fact, a large percentage of militia recruits join at fifteen and sixteen years of age. But they are entered as seventeen. In another year, should they volunteer to go abroad in time of war, as many have done recently, they may be sent, though nominally only eighteen years old, and actually much younger. No line recruit

is permitted to embark for foreign service till twenty years of age. The result is that these young militiamen sicken in hundreds; they fill our hospitals, and are an encumbrance rather than an assistance to our generals.

If militia recruits were carefully selected, if militia battalions were trained sufficiently, and if the officers were taught their business as soldiers, of which the large majority are profoundly ignorant, and if the force, as a whole, were made liable for service abroad in case of war, we might be able to find a place for the militia in a sensible scheme of national defence. But the present force is worse than useless; it is a delusion and a snare, a source of weakness rather than of strength.

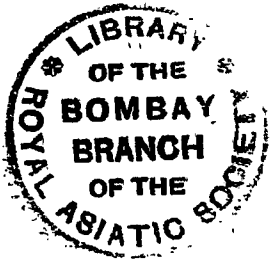
In my scheme the place now supposed to be filled by the militia and volunteers is taken by what I have termed the depôt or sedentary battalions. These men would only be taken for three years, would be quartered close to their own homes, and would keep always in touch with

their friends. These sedentary battalions would represent the armed citizens of the nation about whom so much claptrap has recently been talked. Their liability to future service would be very small. In fact, were my scheme put into force, the military strength of this country would be so vast and well organised that no Power or combination of Powers would ever dream of attacking us. The game would cease to be worth the candle.

I must now bring this little book to a close, and I will conclude with the earnest hope that my countrymen may be brought to realise the real military needs of the Empire, and that they may come to understand that if the fate of this country is ever to be decided in a campaign fought on land, that campaign will be fought on foreign soil, and not on the soil of England.

In conclusion, I may add that I have made no provision for including the military forces of the Colonies in my scheme for national defence. The time for such an amendment is not yet ripe, but it

is rapidly approaching. When Greater Britain recognises her responsibilities, our burdens will be lightened, and the British Empire will be able once more to defy the world in arms.



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